

THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION IS COMMITTED TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT HUMANE No. 32 AND ORDERLY INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION DIALOGUE BENEFITS MIGRANTS AND ON MIGRATION SOCIETIES IOM ASSISTS IN MEETING THE GROWING OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES OF LEVERAGING MIGRATION FOR A MANAGEMENT ADVANCES RESILIENT UNDERSTANDING AND SUSTAINABLE OF POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY: MIGRATION ISSUES OPPORTUNITIES ENCOURAGES AND CHALLENGES SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH MIGRATION UPHOLDS THE HUMAN DIGNITY AND WELL-BEING OF MIGRANTS.

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Publisher: International Organization for Migration  
17 route des Morillons  
P.O. Box 17  
1211 Geneva 19  
Switzerland  
Tel.: + 41 22 717 91 11  
Fax: + 41 22 798 61 50  
Email: [hq@iom.int](mailto:hq@iom.int)  
Website: [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)

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No. 32

INTERNATIONAL  
DIALOGUE  
ON MIGRATION

**LEVERAGING MIGRATION  
FOR A RESILIENT AND  
SUSTAINABLE POST-PANDEMIC  
RECOVERY: OPPORTUNITIES  
AND CHALLENGES**



*The primary goal of IOM is to facilitate the orderly and humane management of international migration ... To achieve that goal, IOM will focus on the following activities, acting at the request of or in agreement with Member States: ...*

*7. To promote, facilitate and support regional and global debate and dialogue on migration, including through the International Dialogue on Migration, so as to advance understanding of the opportunities and challenges it presents, the identification and development of effective policies for addressing those challenges and to identify comprehensive approaches and measures for advancing international cooperation. (IOM Strategy, adopted by the IOM Council in 2007)*

IOM launched the IDM at the fiftieth anniversary session of the IOM Council in 2001, at the request of the Organization's membership. The purpose of the IDM, consistent with the mandate in IOM's Constitution, is to provide a forum for Member States and observers to identify and discuss major issues and challenges in the field of international migration, to contribute to a better understanding of migration and to strengthen cooperation on migration issues between governments and with other partners. The IDM is a platform for the Organization to listen and learn from its Member States and partners, and build an evidence base for projects worldwide. The discussions also contribute to the overall implementation of the SDGs, particularly target 10.7.

The inclusive, informal and constructive format of the IDM has helped to create a more open climate for migration policy debate and to build confidence among the various migration stakeholders. In combination with targeted research and policy analysis, the IDM is providing an open forum for debate and exchanges between all relevant stakeholders and has contributed to a better understanding of topical and emerging migration issues and their linkages with other policy domains. It has also facilitated the exchange of policy options and approaches among policymakers and practitioners, with a view to achieving more effective and humane governance of international migration.

The IDM is organized by the IDM Unit of IOM's Governing Bodies Secretariat. The International Dialogue on Migration Publication Series (or "Red Book Series") is designed to capture and review the results of the events and research carried out within the framework of the IDM. The Red Book Series is prepared and coordinated by the IDM Unit.

More information on the IDM can be found at [www.iom.int/idm](http://www.iom.int/idm) or by contacting [idmworkshop@iom.int](mailto:idmworkshop@iom.int).

This publication presents a summary report of the deliberations at the second session of the 2021 IDM, which took place on 14 and 15 October and was dedicated to the topic: Leveraging Migration for a Resilient and Sustainable Post-pandemic Recovery: Opportunities and Challenges. It offers the reader a collection of experiences, best practices and recommendations shared by the participants at the meeting. It also contains the agenda of the meeting.

The report was drafted by Helen Weldu, Project Support Associate, IDM Unit under the direction of Paula Benea, Migration Policy Officer, IDM Unit, who is responsible for the overall production of this publication. Dejan Keserovic, Head of the Governing Bodies Secretariat, provided overall guidance during the drafting process.

The IDM Unit would like to thank all colleagues in IOM Headquarters and in national and regional offices, who contributed to the production of this publication as well as to the preparations for the Dialogue.

## ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19	Novel coronavirus disease (SARS-CoV-2)
GDP	Gross domestic product
IDM	International Dialogue for Migration
IDP	Internally displaced persons
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund





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**REPORT OF  
THE SECOND SESSION  
OF THE 2021  
INTERNATIONAL  
DIALOGUE ON  
MIGRATION**



# INTRODUCTION

The theme of the second session of the 2021 IDM, held on 14 and 15 October, was “Leveraging migration for a resilient and sustainable post-pandemic recovery: opportunities and challenges”. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions, the session was conducted both in-person and online.

The session focused on the state of global mobility in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic period, in particular the contribution of migrants as key agents of a resilient and sustainable socioeconomic recovery. It highlighted the importance of leaving no one behind, in line with the call of the United Nations Secretary-General to address global and national inequalities as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the related Decade of Action. It aimed to enhance knowledge of the impact of global shocks on migration and development, and to identify lessons learned and recommendations to improve migrant support in the future. The session also acted as a central forum for global policy dialogue, allowing Member States, observers, partner intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental stakeholders to discuss pressing migration issues in order to advance efforts to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration, and to strengthen migrant-inclusive public health systems, with the ultimate aim of promoting attainment of the SDGs.

The session’s participants – senior government representatives, members of the diaspora, academic experts, private sector representatives, international and civil society organizations – took advantage of the space thus afforded to take stock of progress made in terms of knowledge, policy development and effective practices related to the main migration challenges arising during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to highlight opportunities for joint action and for the implementation of relevant

international, regional and national frameworks. They also addressed key questions and challenges related to migration and displacement in the context of the socioeconomic recovery from the pandemic.

The session consisted of eight panels involving 41 speakers and moderators: high-level policymakers and practitioners from countries of origin, transit and destination; migrants and members of the diaspora; and representatives of the European Union, partner United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The panels were designed to ensure a good geographical, gender and sectoral balance.

The session was predicated on recognition of the ongoing devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including on migrants and patterns of mobility, and of the risks that reduced human mobility posed for sustainable development and attainment of the 2030 Agenda. It demonstrated that the response lay in the adoption of holistic, inclusive and collaborative approaches at national, regional and global level, with a view to advancing towards sustainable development and peace. Over the course of the two days, the participants engaged in rich discussions highlighting opportunities for promoting more migrant-inclusive societies together with a resilient and sustainable post-pandemic recovery – and the challenges thereto. They also recognized the importance of acting in a timely manner to help migrants adapt to the impact of the pandemic, so as to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration and to strengthen health systems.

One of the session's aims was to gather insights and recommendations to inform key global policy processes based on a sound understanding of the pandemic's impact on human mobility. One of the points discussed was therefore the way forward to the first International Migration Review Forum, to be held in May 2022, in line with the United Nations General Assembly's call for the IDM "to contribute to each forum by providing relevant data, evidence, best practices, innovative approaches and recommendations as they relate to the implementation of the Global Compact [for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration]"<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly resolution 73/326 on the format and organizational aspects of the international migration review forums (29 July 2019), para. 12; for more information on the resolution, see [https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/gj/files/tmzbd416/files/docs/a\\_res\\_73\\_326\\_e.pdf](https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/gj/files/tmzbd416/files/docs/a_res_73_326_e.pdf).

# THE PROCEEDINGS IN BRIEF

During the two days of the session, the participants discussed key issues related to the state of global mobility in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic efforts over the course of the following eight panel sessions:

**Panel 1:** The impact of COVID-19 on mobility: migration triggers, government response and the future of border management in the post-pandemic era

**Panel 2:** Advancing socioeconomic rights and access to services in the COVID-19 era and beyond

**Panel 3:** Crisis response in the time of COVID-19

**Panel 4:** The role of migrants in the post-COVID-19 recovery and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

**Panel 5:** Addressing the challenges faced by migrant youth during the pandemic and empowering youth to facilitate sustainable recovery

**Panel 6:** Harnessing the potential of migrant women for a sustainable socioeconomic recovery

**Panel 7:** Empowering migrants and transnational communities as development actors: financial inclusion, remittances and beyond

**Panel 8:** The road to the International Migration Review Forum – looking ahead to the next IDM

This section briefly presents the proceedings of the eight thematic panels and of the opening and closing sessions.

## Opening session

The session was opened by the IOM Director General, who invited the participants to consider the measures needed to enable migrants to make a full contribution to social and economic healing from the pandemic and ensure that they were less vulnerable to global shocks in the future. The pandemic threatened to undo years of progress towards equitable and inclusive services in support of sustainable development, having pushed millions out of education and decent work, and into hunger, undernourishment and poverty. The repercussions would be lasting if action was not taken to ensure that health and food systems, job centres, education and vocational training services, and financial inclusion services, among others, responded to the needs of migrants and IDPs and gave them the right tools to continue acting as key players in the long-term development of their communities.

The time had come to rethink the approach to managing today's global challenges and to promote innovative, multidimensional and inclusive responses that prioritized prevention and preparedness in the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. The participants should seize the opportunity provided by the IDM to discuss the implications of the pandemic for migrants and their role in response and recovery efforts, notably by making recommendations for action. They should exchange views and share examples of good practices, lessons learned and recommendations that could inform implementation of commitments made under key relevant international frameworks on those issues.

The Director General was joined in the opening session by Anuradha Gupta, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, who delivered a keynote speech. Describing the “fragility multiplier” role of the pandemic for migrants and IDPs, she recalled that there was no clear path to recovery from the pandemic without the inclusion of migrants and warned of the severe cost of exclusionary trends and inequitable access to immunization for the global economy. Gavi's partnership with IOM aimed to ensure that no one was left behind in terms of immunization and to realize the shared goal of protecting the health and well-being of everyone, everywhere, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized. The IDM session afforded an opportunity to gain a deep understanding of realities on the ground and thereby to help promote more effective ways of supporting migrants and IDPs and allowing them to live a life of dignity.



## **Panel 1: The impact of COVID-19 on mobility: migration triggers, government response, and the future of border management in the post-pandemic era**

The emergence of new COVID-19 variants had led to continually modified travel restrictions and immigration procedures. Throughout the pandemic, the management of borders has revealed some of the existing shortcomings of national immigration systems, including their lack of resilience. The panel focused on the pandemic's impact on cross-border human mobility and discussed the importance of rethinking approaches to data on human mobility and the need for international coordination of travel requirements and measures.

The panel was moderated by the IOM Deputy Director General for Management and Reform. In opening the discussion, she highlighted that governments had been divided in their COVID-19 response and that there was no one-size-fits-all approach to the socioeconomic challenges of the pandemic. The participants should have a conversation about what was missing in the international community's response, the impact of the pandemic, and what could be done better next time a similar crisis came around. The panel started with a presentation by Nuno Nunes, Global Displacement Tracking Matrix Coordinator, on approaches to data on human mobility and the findings of the Migration Policy Institute/IOM report on the impact of COVID-19 on global mobility.<sup>2</sup> The panel featured four speakers. Sarah Lou Ysmael Arriola, Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, the Philippines, described her Government's efforts to facilitate the return of migrant workers through a response based on the central components of relief, repatriation, recovery and reintegration. Jessica Bither, Senior Expert Migration, Global Issues, Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH, presented the work conducted with policy experts and practitioners on the impact of COVID-19 on migration and human mobility, looking at "what if" scenarios for the post-COVID-19 world. Henrik Nielsen, Deputy Director-General in charge of International and Horizontal Affairs, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission, presented the efforts

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<sup>2</sup> See Meghan Benton et al., *COVID-19 and the State of Global Mobility in 2020* (Migration Policy Institute/IOM, Geneva, 2021). Available at <https://publications.iom.int/books/covid-19-and-state-global-mobility-2020>.

promoted by the Commission to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on human mobility and respond to the needs of vulnerable populations, in particular Member States' efforts to, for example, secure access to temporary residence permits and health-care benefits for asylum seekers and to carry out large-scale regularization programmes for undocumented migrants. Ninglan Wang, Head, Points of Entry and Border Health Unit, Country Readiness Strengthening Department, World Health Organization, addressed the implementation of COVID-19-related travel restrictions and public health measures, the need for evidence- and risk-based measures, and the importance of developing Member States' capacity to collect and share data.

## **Panel 2: Advancing socioeconomic rights and access to services in the COVID-19 era and beyond**

The second panel discussed practices for protecting migrant workers across supply chains, ethical recruitment and how to empower local and regional governments, which were at the forefront when it came to delivering policy and providing access to services. The panellists emphasized inclusion and equity as key to COVID-19 preparedness, response and recovery. They therefore focused on advancing migrants' access to health care in accordance with the right to health, in line with universal health coverage principles, and with a view to achieving SDG3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages). They stressed the role of diaspora health professionals and migrant workers as important first responders, and the need to include migrants in the post-COVID recovery effort.

The panel was moderated by the IOM Deputy Director General for Operations, who, in her opening remarks, described the tragic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on societies. Despite the resilience within communities, the pandemic had exacerbated inequities and been a disruptor that had forced countries, individuals and communities to adapt. In her view, the inclusion of migrants in service provision was not just the right thing to do, it was smart. The panel featured five speakers. Basem Al-Dahamsheh, Governor, Director of Nationality, Foreign Affairs

and Investment, Ministry of Interior, Jordan,<sup>3</sup> described the plans that the Kingdom, a country of destination, had adopted to ensure that migrants had access to basic services and benefited from social cohesion. Bola Bardet, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Susu, underlined the need not only to acknowledge migrants and diaspora members as real assets both for their countries of origin and destination, but also to respond to the challenges and needs they faced in the context of the pandemic. Jeremy Robbins, Chief Executive Officer, New American Economy, shared his experience of how cities had mobilized existing services to include migrants in the post-COVID-19 recovery effort to leave no one behind. David Khoudour, Human Mobility Advisor, UNDP, and Cécile Riallant, Head, Migration and Sustainable Development, IOM, presented the UNDP–IOM post-pandemic partnership to help governments include migrants and communities in socioeconomic reintegration and recovery efforts. They also shared the IOM–UNDP “co-created solution” to promote greater social cohesion between local communities and migrants/refugees.

### **Panel 3: Crisis response in the time of COVID-19**

The third panel focused on humanitarian action during the COVID-19 pandemic and the effect on crisis response. Migrants had largely been overlooked in pandemic preparedness and response planning, in particular in crisis settings with fragile or non-existent social systems. For countries affected by other crises, the pandemic had exacerbated the difficulties of delivering humanitarian assistance and the plight of displaced populations, migrants in vulnerable situations and host communities. The panellists emphasized the importance of crisis-response measures and humanitarian inter-agency planning during the pandemic, including lessons learned, and described the adjustments made to the mode of delivering humanitarian assistance.

The panel was moderated by Jeffrey Labovitz, Director, Department of Operations and Emergencies, IOM, who opened the discussion by recalling that the challenges faced by migrants and IDPs merited special attention and that the time had come to consider what had worked and

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<sup>3</sup> The speaker provided a written contribution to this panel discussion.

what could work better, particularly in countries already facing numerous issues beyond COVID-19. It featured four panellists. Md. Mohsin, Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Bangladesh, discussed his country's contingency plan for the most vulnerable people during the pandemic. Ceyda Dumlupinar Guntay, Deputy Programme Coordinator, Migration Services Department, Turkish Red Crescent, presented the innovative ways in which her organization had adjusted the delivery of humanitarian assistance during the pandemic. Diego Beltrand, the IOM Director General's Special Envoy for the Regional Response to the Venezuelan Situation, presented the impact of COVID-19 on Venezuelan migrants and refugees and IOM's response adapted to the pandemic context. Christian Mulamba, Country Director, International Medical Corps, Central African Republic, shared his perspective on the preparedness and response measures implemented by his organization in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Central African Republic, where social systems were fragile or non-existent.

#### **Panel 4: The role of migrants in the post-COVID-19 recovery and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals**

The participants in the fourth panel discussed the key role that migrants and the diaspora would play in the post-COVID-19 recovery and achievement of the SDGs from the point of view of their own experience and how the pandemic had affected their work. Mitigating the pandemic's negative impacts, protecting communities and people on the move, and harnessing the positive power of migration to recover better required a good understanding of the effects of the pandemic on human mobility and development. In that regard, the participants noted that local, national and regional stakeholders played a particularly important role in translating global commitments into action and in addressing local challenges and the needs and vulnerabilities of migrant populations. As the direct experience and perspective of migrant workers and diaspora representatives showed, inclusion and service provision were local matters, and it was locally that a better understanding could be gained of migration-related needs and opportunities.

The panel was moderated by Monica Goracci, Director, Department of Migration Management, IOM. In her opening remarks, she reminded the participants that the mobility restrictions introduced around the world had had an immediate and potentially long-term impact on the attainment of many of the SDGs. There were three panellists. Amina Hersi Moghe, Founder, Atiak Sugar Project, Uganda, said that the youth unemployment problem in Africa had been exacerbated by the pandemic, with most young people moving from rural to urban areas to work, and presented the Project's work to address this. Caroline Caporossi, Founder, Association for the Integration of Women and Youth Forum, shared the experience of her Association to support migrant employment during the pandemic. Peter Kwok, Chairman and Founder, UK Federation of Chinese Professionals, underscored the challenges faced by diasporas during the pandemic and the need to strengthen community ties and communication between diaspora associations.

### **Panel 5: Addressing the challenges faced by migrant youth during the pandemic and empowering youth to facilitate sustainable recovery**

The fifth panel focused on three key areas of ongoing youth-related work – the COVID-19 recovery, post-pandemic economic development in a green and digital economy, and improving educational outcomes – in line with the recommendations of Our Common Agenda,<sup>4</sup> a plan launched by the United Nations Secretary-General in September 2021.

The panel was moderated by Wen Li, Director, Department of International Cooperation and Partnerships, IOM, who opened the discussions with a reminder that young people were important players in the COVID-19 response and recovery, and that youth organizations had been working hard to make their voices heard; the barriers to youth participation in a sustainable recovery must be removed. There were three panellists. Rasika Jayasuriya, Policy and Programme Specialist, Global Migration and Displacement, UNICEF, spoke about the disruption that

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<sup>4</sup> See United Nations, *Our Common Agenda – Report of the Secretary-General* (New York, 2021), for more information. Available at [www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common\\_Agenda\\_Report\\_English.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf).

the pandemic had caused to the education of 1.5 billion children and presented UNICEF's "Reimagine Education"<sup>5</sup> initiative to enable youth participation in recovery efforts by finding world-class digital solutions and providing digital learning opportunities worldwide. Sagyntai uulu Arstanbek, Coordinator of the "Training Centres at Mountain Pastures" project in Kyrgyzstan, spoke about the importance of involving young people and children in the COVID-19 recovery and creating conditions for equal access to education by vulnerable groups of the population. Minh Nguyen, Asia-Pacific Regional Lead, Migration Youth and Children Platform, presented the Platform's efforts to facilitate a sustainable recovery and to build resilience and respond to the needs of migrant youth.

## **Panel 6: Harnessing the potential of migrant women for a sustainable socioeconomic recovery**

The sixth panel looked at the role of migrant women as major promoters of and contributors to socioeconomic development, focusing on some of the barriers they faced when it came to enhancing their own development and contributions. Acknowledging that women had less access to social protection and were more exposed to sexual and gender-based violence, labour exploitation and the double burden of being in informal work, the panellists exchanged perspectives on and best practices for empowering migrant women to advance sustainable development and the COVID-19 recovery.

The panel was moderated by Laurent de Boeck, Chief of Mission, IOM Egypt. It featured three panellists. Diana Echeverria, Director of Human Mobility and Attention to Migrants, El Salvador, presented the programmes put in place to support returning migrant Salvadoran women during the COVID-19 crisis and to enable their role in the socioeconomic recovery from the pandemic. Fridah Ntarangwi, Founder and Managing Director, Zidicircle, Kenya, shared the work of her organization to facilitate the social inclusion of migrants and diaspora members and to boost their untapped economic potential through entrepreneurship. Dina Nuryati,

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<sup>5</sup> Under the initiative, UNICEF USA and the Center for Global Education at the Brookings Institution brought together UNICEF experts in the fields of education and connectivity in late November 2021. See [www.unicefusa.org/stories/](http://www.unicefusa.org/stories/) for further information.

Coordinator for Research and International Relations, Migrant Workers Union (SBMI), Indonesia, described the multiple challenges faced by women migrant workers during COVID-19 and presented SBMI's work to ensure that women migrants benefitted from their rights regardless of their status or sector of employment in their countries of origin and destination.

## **Panel 7: Empowering migrants and transnational communities as development actors: financial inclusion, remittances and beyond**

The seventh panel convened global leaders and experts on migrants' contributions to development, in particular remittances, and drew renewed attention to the importance of supporting migrant and diaspora as development partners through financial inclusion, improved financial market infrastructure to help reduce remittance transaction costs, digitalization, better data on migrant contributions to help define policy responses, and broader diaspora engagement policy and regulatory frameworks. In taking stock of the lessons learned in terms of engaging with transnational communities during the pandemic, the panel also reviewed the progress made since the Diaspora Ministerial Conference<sup>6</sup> convened in 2013 and laid the groundwork for coordination and initiatives looking ahead to 2022 and the forthcoming International Migration Forum Review.

The panel was moderated by Marina Manke, Head, Labour Mobility and Human Development Division, IOM, who said that IOM shared the broad view of migrant contributions set out in Objective 19 of the Global Compact for Migration, which went beyond remittances and financial transfers. She emphasized the need to discuss the role of governments in ensuring that migrants became more meaningful agents and partners of development. There were four panellists. Veronica Studsgaard, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, International Association of Money Transfer Networks, presented the lessons learned during the COVID-19 response

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<sup>6</sup> Organized by IOM in the framework of the IDM; see [www.iom.int/diaspora-ministerial-conference-2013](http://www.iom.int/diaspora-ministerial-conference-2013) for further information.

regarding remittances and financial inclusion of migrants and diaspora communities. Leon Isaacs, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, DMA Global, presented the development partner's perspective on the need to institutionalize measurement and data-collection practices to support policymaking, encourage migrants and the diaspora to keep investing and thereby promote solutions to global challenges. Gerardo Pérez, Director of Diaspora and Development, El Salvador, presented the work of his Government to support and promote migrants' inclusion and their contribution to COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. Abdifatah Diriye Ahmed, Director, Somali National Institute of Health, underlined the importance of the Somali diaspora to the country's development agenda, in particular strengthening health systems and services and described his Government's efforts to empower migrants and diaspora communities, including by equipping them with technical expertise to facilitate their engagement for development.

### **Panel 8: The road to the International Migration Review Forum – looking ahead to the next IDM**

Member States having asked that the IDM to contribute to the first International Migration Review Forum, in 2022, the eighth and final panel provided them with an opportunity to discuss efforts to implement the Global Compact for Migration and the contribution of the first IDM session in 2022.

The panel was moderated by the IOM Director General and featured three panellists. Sanjay Bhattacharya, Vice Minister, Consular, Passport, Visas and Overseas Indian Affairs, India, highlighted the importance of multilateral and bilateral cooperation on migration and showcased the Indian Government's activities to implement the Global Compact. Christine O'Dwyer, Deputy Head, Migration and Human Security Division (GLOBAL.GI.4), European External Action Service, European Union, underscored the need for strong regional and multilateral approaches featuring a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach to global challenges. José Luis Pardo Cuerdo, Ambassador, Special Envoy for Migration Affairs, Spain, presented his country's perspective of Global Compact implementation and preparations for the International Migration Review Forum.



## Closing session

The second session of the 2021 IDM ended with closing remarks by the IOM Director General, who commended the participants for having identified the effects of the pandemic on migration management systems and finding ways to work together to respond effectively to similar events in the future. Pandemic response required collective, innovative, inclusive and integrated action at local, national and regional level, in order to ensure “that the recovery and the way we deal with it does not exacerbate inequality and the infringement of human rights”. The session had been helpful in laying the groundwork for the next IDM session, in February 2022, and the first International Migration Review Forum.



## KEY MESSAGES OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 2021 IDM

Six key messages emerged from the two days of discussion and serve to structure this report.

- (1) **New approaches are needed to human mobility and border management.** The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of well-governed migration for prosperous and healthy societies, while demonstrating the negative impact of reduced human mobility on sustainable development.
- (2) **Pandemic recovery efforts must ensure inclusivity and access to socioeconomic services.** Alongside regional, national and local governmental actors, it is essential to ensure that communities and individuals are included and can participate in efforts to address the complex challenges around migration and the COVID-19 recovery, and to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- (3) **Pandemic situations require innovative and effective crisis response measures.** The IDM session included a discussion of the impact of the pandemic on crisis-response measures and inter-agency humanitarian planning, during which successful practices and lessons learned were highlighted.
- (4) **Migrants must be empowered to develop creative responses for the post-COVID-19 recovery and accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.** It is fundamental to leverage the capacities and contributions of migrants, young people and women as agents of change, in order

to ensure the success of collective efforts through a whole-of-society, inclusive, rights-based and gender-responsive approach.

- (5) **A more comprehensive approach is needed to the role of transnational communities and remittances.** It has become crucial to have a forward-looking and practice-oriented discussion of migrant remittances, financial inclusion and broader diaspora engagement, one that highlights the important role of migration in achievement of the 2030 Agenda.
- (6) **Looking ahead to the first International Migration Review Forum, the IDM will play a key role in promoting the use of evidence and best practices in Global Compact implementation.** Regional partnerships and dialogue are key to the implementation of global frameworks and the development of regional instruments more adapted to the regional context. In this regard, IOM is supporting Member State efforts to prepare for the first International Migration Review Forum through consultations, national reports, and various regional and cross-regional cooperation processes. The IDM session in the spring of 2022 will enable further discussion of preparations for the Forum.

# THE KEY MESSAGES IN THE WORDS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

## 1. New approaches are needed to human mobility and border management

### Overview

As many participants stressed throughout the discussions, border management and management of human mobility during the pandemic called attention to existing shortcomings within national migration systems, including their lack of resilience to shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Even before the crisis, precarious living and working conditions, undocumented essential workers, asylum seekers undertaking perilous journeys and migrants stranded in situations of destitution had been part of the scenario. The pandemic and consequent travel and mobility restrictions had compounded existing and created new vulnerabilities for migrant populations. Disruptions to global mobility could be expected to alter migration management in the long term, marking critical turning points in relation to health, immigration and border management.

## Discussion

According to the participants, with the world's countries continuing to grapple with the long-term impact of the health crisis while planning recovery measures, the time had come to follow up on the 2020 IDM discussion of the COVID-19 crisis and its effects on human mobility.<sup>7</sup>

The pandemic highlighted the importance of well-governed migration for prosperous and healthy societies, and the negative impact of reduced human mobility on sustainable development. When governments first rolled out measures to curb the spread of COVID-19, from border closures to local lockdowns, very little was known about how they would affect populations on the move, such as migrant workers, international students, seafarers and IDPs.

In today's highly interconnected world with its high levels of human mobility, border closures had repercussions across all sectors of society and the economy. The pandemic and the consequent travel and mobility restrictions compounded existing and created new vulnerabilities for migrant populations. The participants shared examples of measures undertaken at national level to assist and protect migrants in that regard. Several governments reported on actions taken to facilitate the return of migrant workers and the life-saving role played by their consular missions abroad. For example, Sarah Lou Ysmael Arriola described the Philippine Government's efforts to facilitate the return of migrant workers through a response based on relief, repatriation, recovery and reintegration. The fact that many countries continued to suffer deep inequalities in access to health care and vaccines was of great concern. It was important to build a common approach and to foster cooperation and assistance between countries of origin and destination.

In parallel, to support effective policies and action, a greater effort should be made to strengthen knowledge of the root causes of migration and of effective practices for post-COVID-19 recovery and resilience-building. As was pointed out by Ninglan Wang (WHO), collaboration at the global and local levels needed to be intensified, so that everyone spoke

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<sup>7</sup> IOM, *COVID-19 crisis: Reimagining the role of migrants and human mobility for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals*, International Dialogue on Migration Series, No. 30 (Geneva, 2021). Available at <https://publications.iom.int/books/international-dialogue-migration-no-30-covid-19-crisis-reimagining-role-migrants-and-human>.

the same language, matters were clear to the public and scientific evidence from past outbreaks was used coherently to prepare for future pandemics. That meant strengthening data-collection capacities and mapping risks and vulnerabilities at the local level. It was crucial to obtain the data needed to conduct risk assessments and develop public health measures.

In that regard, the participants underscored that special measures should be evidence- and risk-based. Data-sharing was vital in crisis situations and had become even more important during the COVID-19 pandemic. As Ceyda Dumlupinar Guntay (Turkish Red Crescent) said, understanding of what was happening in the field required investment in digitalization, but also in data privacy and security. Several delegates said that the challenges of the pandemic for human mobility and socioeconomic development could be most effectively managed through cooperation among all relevant stakeholders, including migrants and the diaspora.

According to Jessica Bither (Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH), approaches to data on human mobility needed to be revisited in the light of the pandemic's impact. Indeed, more research was needed to better understand that impact and its role in shaping population movements, and to inform policies and measures to address the complex challenges faced by the most vulnerable communities. The capacity of governments to collect and share data had to be developed accordingly. IOM and its partner organizations were ready to support those efforts and had developed tools, such as the Global Migration Data Analysis Centre<sup>8</sup> and the Displacement Tracking Matrix<sup>9</sup>, for that purpose. In addition, "what if" scenarios should be part of strategic foresight exercises involving scenario planning. Data collection raised many questions (would digitalization for human mobility be used to provide opportunities for mobility or lead to even greater surveillance of individuals? had the time come to rethink the privilege of mobility and who had access to it? what was the role of the international community in shaping the new system as it emerged?). It therefore remained essential to safeguard general rules on protection and data privacy, and to ensure that data were properly shared between humanitarian partners.

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<sup>8</sup> The Centre supports evidence-based policies, programming and communication by making available improved international migration data (see <https://gmdac.iom.int>).

<sup>9</sup> The Displacement Tracking Matrix gathers and analyses data with a view to disseminating critical multilayered information on the mobility, vulnerabilities and needs of displaced and mobile populations (see <https://dtm.iom.int/>).

Basem Al-Dahamsheh said that Jordan fully recognized the importance of data and the need to have evidence-based policies for better migration governance. It was currently working to establish a unified database of migrants and refugees to ensure that such policies were implemented and the most vulnerable identified. As many participants noted throughout the session, including Nuno Nunes (IOM), without data, it was impossible to issue standards that were understood by all those involved. The integrated implementation of global policy frameworks on human mobility and its drivers would be critical in the post-pandemic scenario; hence the need for international coordination of travel requirements and measures. That would require multisectoral, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, with inter-agency cooperation and proper coordination between countries and sectors, national and local authorities.

Speaking from the floor, delegates from Bangladesh, China, Colombia, Libya, Mexico, the Niger, Qatar and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela agreed that there was a need for international coordination on travel requirements and measures for creating pathways for safer human mobility. In that regard, mutual acceptance of COVID-19-related health certificates was crucial to avoid a potential global mobility divide. As the delegate from Libya emphasized, it was high time for the international community to demonstrate the political will, backed by sensible action, to alleviate the suffering of innocent human beings. Article 1 of the IOM Constitution called for the protection of migrants, and collective action was required to ensure that the humanitarian situation brought about by the pandemic did not get worse. The representative of China recalled the important role that information-sharing and cooperation on the provision of medical assistance and supplies had played in the global COVID-19 response. Nuno Nunes concluded that there was a need to invest more in preparedness efforts, rely on scientific evidence, raise public awareness and demonstrate political leadership in response to those challenges.

## Recommendations

- Data should be collected more systematically and disaggregated by migration status, to ensure better understanding of migrant protection needs and challenges in the COVID-19 context and effective support for all migrant populations. Building the evidence



base on the impact of COVID-19 on mobility and populations on the move remains a priority in terms of finding effective responses.

- An integrated approach should be adopted that takes holistic account of cross-border mobility and international health regulations. This will require multisectoral whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, with proper coordination between countries and sectors, national and local authorities, and agencies.
- Response and recovery measures should not add to discrimination, stigmatization and inequality, or infringe human rights.
- There should be stronger cooperation to prevent the cross-border spread of COVID-19 and improve global migration governance. One of the central elements of the resumption of cross-border human mobility is the use of digital health certificates, and their implications for people on the move need to be assessed.
- Comprehensive data on the impact of COVID-19-related movement restrictions on migrants should be collected and analysed, for the purposes of future policy frameworks at national and global level.

## 2. Pandemic recovery efforts must ensure inclusivity and access to socioeconomic services

### Overview

The participants noted that the COVID-19 pandemic threatened to undo years of progress towards equitable, inclusive services in support of migrants' well-being and broader sustainable development. It had pushed millions, particularly migrants and disadvantaged groups, out of education and decent work, and into hunger, undernourishment and poverty. It was essential to ensure that these communities and individuals, including migrants and diaspora, were integrated into global, regional and national government efforts to address complex challenges presented by COVID-19 and ensure an equitable recovery for all. The focus should be on advancing migrants' access to socioeconomic services, so as to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### Discussion

The world's countries issued over 110,000 COVID-related restrictions on travel and other national measures in 2020. The United Nations estimated that almost 100 million people would fall into poverty – the first such setback in over 20 years. The session focused inter alia on the role of the COVID-19 pandemic in exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, and on the challenges facing migrants and IDPs, with many participants stressing that post-pandemic recovery efforts offered a unique opportunity to build more resilient, sustainable and inclusive societies. During Panel 2, many participants pointed out that migrant workers had greatly contributed to pandemic responses by helping to ensure that essential sectors such as health care, food and services, and maintenance and domestic work continued to function. Thanks to their skills, knowledge and resources, migrants have made and can continue

to make a substantial contribution to recovery efforts in countries of both destination and origin. As many participants stressed, it was of the utmost importance to address the barriers and challenges that migrants faced, in order to ensure an equitable and inclusive recovery from the pandemic and to prevent its effects from undermining progress towards the SDGs. At the same time, migrants – particularly those in irregular situations – faced additional barriers to accessing the same services as the rest of the population. In terms of health in particular, the pandemic had underscored both the particular vulnerabilities of migrants to adverse health outcomes and the crucial role those same migrants played in health care and services for aging populations. For example, in some cases migrants found it difficult to access health services, were neglected by health promotion or occupational health services, or lacked access to health financing, essential medicines and service delivery.

Many panellists, including Jeremy Robbins (New American Economy), remarked that the COVID-19 pandemic had disproportionately negatively affected migrants, particularly those in irregular situations, who had limited social support networks and safety nets in destination countries. Migrants and their families had been particularly affected by income and job loss, as many sectors of the economy with higher rates of employment of migrant workers, such as the food and hospitality sectors, had suffered from COVID-19-related lockdown measures. Many had been unable to return to their home countries because of border closures and travel restrictions, while others had been unable to access employment abroad. The New American Economy, a bipartisan research and advocacy organization, had conducted a survey<sup>10</sup> to measure such disparate treatment and help craft a better recovery. On the positive front, cities and local partners had stepped in and immigrants knew of organizations to which they could turn for help. Most of the cities that worked to help had formalized partnerships with immigrant community leaders to collect feedback. Some had focused on providing medical care, while others had created resiliency plans to document immigrants who were left out of national plans. Some cities provided direct cash assistance to all residents in need during the pandemic, including undocumented immigrants.

In the same vein, Cécile Riallant highlighted the ways in which IOM and UNDP were implementing joint programmes and leveraging

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<sup>10</sup> The survey results and tools are available on the New American Economy website at [www.newamericaneconomy.org](http://www.newamericaneconomy.org).

synergies on the ground to enhance collaboration and partnership among governments, civil society, migrants and diaspora associations and UN agencies in support of inclusive socioeconomic recovery. In Nepal, for instance, IOM and UNDP have supported local and regional authorities to promote the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants, defying the odds of a global pandemic, economic challenges, capacity needs and limited resources through inclusive service provision, protection and opportunities for decent work.

The COVID-19 pandemic had triggered incidents of discrimination, xenophobia and racism. Migrants were also often stigmatized in relation to the pandemic – in many cases on the basis of racial or cultural stereotypes predating the crisis – due to negative perceptions of their countries of origin or the false assumption that they were more likely to transmit the disease to others. This had exacerbated existing inequities, whereby migrants were excluded from or reluctant to access basic social services available to the general public. At the same time, digitalization of services and intracommunity tensions had heightened the risk of social exclusion. One of the objectives of the IDM was to showcase positive solutions, including the contributions of migration and migrants to the COVID-19 recovery. As was obvious from the statements made during the session, many State and non-State organizations were already promoting an integrated approach that nurtured a positive narrative of migration. Bola Bardet, for example, had learned from personal experience how hard it was to access health care in her home country of Benin and that neither remittances nor similar financial assistance were sufficient to finance the health of relatives at home. In response, she had created Susu,<sup>11</sup> a start-up making health-care services available to members of the African diaspora looking to offer the best quality of care to their families back home. Built on a growing network of alliances and partnerships, Susu arranged for preventive health care, medical coverage in the country and abroad, and assistance. Its members, who were from the diaspora and signed up for a year, obtained coverage for designated beneficiaries in countries of origin, giving them access to quality health-care services and personalized follow-up. Susu was currently present in Côte d'Ivoire and it was expanding to Benin, Senegal, Cameroon and other countries. Due consideration of both migrants' needs and contributions was highlighted as vital to inclusive pandemic recovery, recognizing the great solidarity displayed by migrants with communities in their countries of origin such

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<sup>11</sup> For more information about Susu, see [www.susu.fr/qui-sommes-nous](http://www.susu.fr/qui-sommes-nous).

as the payment of shipments of oxygen to their homelands. Reaffirming that migrants should not only be included in virtue of their contributions, but also as human rights holders, participants stressed that when migrants are protected and empowered, they can be agents of positive change for themselves and for societies more broadly.

The COVID-19 crisis made long-standing inequalities more visible and disproportionately affected people in vulnerable situations. The solution was clear: equal access to services for all regardless of migratory status, gender, sexual orientation, age or any other factor. While migrants, particularly those in irregular situations, experienced specific vulnerabilities because they had more limited social networks and safety nets, suffered discrimination or had unequal access to key services, it was important to remember that they were major contributors to the economy and to cultural diversity, in countries of origin and of destination. According to Basem Al-Dahamshah, Jordan, a country of destination for millions of refugees and migrants, had adapted its responses to the pandemic. When the pandemic had first hit, for example, epidemiological investigation teams had surveyed all people resident in Jordan, regardless of their nationalities or legal status. All infected persons were taken to public hospitals and treated free of charge. The Government of Jordan had also issued several resolutions to allow migrants, including migrant workers, to regularize their situations, granting them amnesties that waived overstay fines and accumulated work permit fees. Under the national COVID-19 immunization plan, vaccinations were available to all, including refugees and migrants, free of charge.

The participants gave many examples throughout the two-day session of the positive role that migrants continued to play in supporting local economies or providing critical services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The direct experience and perspective of migrant workers and diaspora members, including Fridah Ntarangwi (Zidicircle), showed that inclusion and service provision took place at the local level. The local level was also where a better understanding could be gained of the needs and opportunities surrounding migration, including to inform national policy and planning. When well-managed at the local level, migration can be a development strategy for people to improve their lives and meet their aspirations, ultimately accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals through good migration governance. The Atiak Sugar Project in Uganda, for example, was an engine for development supporting the livelihoods of vulnerable people, particularly women.

Communities owned the land and harvested the sugar cane. The Atiak Sugar Project, in turn, provided seeds, oversaw planting, processed the sugar cane, and purchased it from the farmer. Once it was running at full capacity, its factory would support 14,000 farmers and factory workers.<sup>12</sup> The Project's founder, Amina Hersi Moghe, spoke about the importance of empowering local communities and the ability of the diaspora to adapt to its location and do what needed to be done; all its members needed were guidance and skills. According to her and other migrant and diaspora representatives, when empowered with equal access to services, opportunities and rights, migrants could drive innovation and improve existing services, including in the areas of health care, education and infrastructure.

Similarly, Peter Kwok shared the experience of the UK Federation of Chinese Professionals regarding efforts to make the Chinese diaspora feel included amid the challenges of the pandemic. In order to empower and support diaspora members during the crisis, the Federation had strengthened their trust, resilience and sense of self-help. During lockdowns, it had been difficult for young diaspora members to access decent work, as they were unable to travel through the United Kingdom or to China to meet with employers, and an online UK-China career fair had therefore been organized. In that situation, a strengthened sense of community and communication (e.g. the issue of a joint statement signed by over 100 diaspora associations) with other, non-Chinese diaspora associations had proven effective at supporting diaspora communities affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

As many participants emphasized, early action and preparedness were crucial if countries and communities were to become more resilient and less prone to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was thus important to address the socioeconomic impact on migrants and communities, and to strengthen country and regional support for migrants and diaspora members alike.

In October 2020, the IOM/UNDP Principals had agreed on priorities for a reinforced partnership between the two agencies at country, regional and global level. As a first step in translating that commitment into practice, both agencies had launched a joint seed funding initiative in December 2020, preceded by a call for proposals, to support the work of

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<sup>12</sup> For more information on the factory, see <https://atiaksugar.com/>.

IOM country offices to address the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 on migrants and communities in nine countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America (Bangladesh, Belarus, El Salvador, Guinea, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Peru and the Republic of Moldova). David Khoudour and Cécile Riallant provided a general overview of the initiatives, lessons learned and recommended action points to further strengthen and amplify the IOM–UNDP collaboration to “build back better” from the pandemic. They shared the IOM–UNDP “co-created solution” to promote greater social cohesion between local communities and migrants and refugees.<sup>13</sup> Their partnership within the framework of the UN Network on Migration, in line with both the commitments of both agencies under the Global Compact for Migration, was fundamental to that endeavor. Their ability to develop responses that softened the blows of the pandemic, protected people on the move and their families, and harnessed the positive power of migration for recovering better, depended on sound understanding of the pandemic’s effects on human mobility and development. It was therefore essential to identify solutions that empowered migrants to contribute to socioeconomic responses efficiently and concretely alongside local populations, enabling them to act as agents of change and development. It was important to turn global efforts for sustainable development into context-specific action in support of national and local authorities that leveraged the complementary contributions of partners.

While COVID-19 had been a disruptor and forced countries, individuals and communities to adapt, it had also revealed their resilience. At the same time, much could be done to address the inequities that COVID-19 exacerbated. A number of speakers representing Member States and other organizations, including Bangladesh, the Council of Europe, the Niger, Japan, Portugal and the United Arab Emirates, shared examples of effective practices to that end. For instance, the representative of Portugal said that her Government had made temporary measures permanent, improving access to mainstream services through better information and the removal of barriers, and granting migrants the same rights as Portuguese citizens. A delegate from Japan, speaking from the floor, said that his Government had endeavoured to include migrants and was discussing a project with IOM that focused on mental health, host communities, reintegration of returnees, and recovery from COVID-19 in African countries (e.g. Cameroon).

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<sup>13</sup> For more information, see [www.undp.org/speeches/including-migrants-and-communities-socio-economic-recovery-experiences-iom-undp](http://www.undp.org/speeches/including-migrants-and-communities-socio-economic-recovery-experiences-iom-undp).

The Government of the United Arab Emirates, for its part, had made sure that everybody had access to COVID-19 testing from the beginning, and to health care as needed. It had also developed a platform for those whose jobs were threatened, to facilitate their integration into the labour market and the search for other jobs. Delegates from the Niger and Bangladesh said that their countries had adapted national programmes to include migrants and recalled that the pandemic would only be overcome by universal access to health care and international solidarity. All the participants concluded that in such unprecedented times, there had to be a shift from the immediate socioeconomic response to a longer-term recovery that built on migrants as “assets” and contributors to the communities and societies in which they lived and from which they came. COVID-19 had shown that there was a need to strengthen advocacy measures, focusing on areas such as universal health coverage for migrants and their inclusion in national responses and economic relief plans, and to combat xenophobia, discrimination and stigmatization of migrants and returnees.

## Recommendations

- There should be recognition of the key role that migrants and members of the diaspora played as agents of positive social change, notably the way that they enriched society and contributed to economic development in their countries of origin and destination.
- Commitments made in the Global Compact for Migration regarding safe and non-discriminatory access to health care and all other basic services for migrants must be implemented.
- In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, countries and other stakeholders should partner to facilitate equal distribution of and access to vaccines, particularly for the most vulnerable populations, including migrants and IDPs.
- As part of their COVID-19 recovery efforts, governments should prioritize efforts to strengthen health systems, and protect and include those in situations of vulnerability, including migrants, in order to reduce the risks of future health crises while making societies more resilient and helping to address the drivers of forced migration



and displacement. Specific guidance and tools to support such efforts are available and should be used.

- Steps should be taken to implement and strengthen mechanisms to protect the rights of migrants, regardless of their status, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable migrants, and including efforts to ensure non-discriminatory access to social services.
- All should have equal access to services, regardless of their migratory status.
- Crucially, there should be a rights-based approach focusing on migrants' job and livelihood security.
- Policy approaches should reflect the positive contributions of migrants and diaspora, in recognition that due consideration of migration as a cross-cutting issue across all policy areas is needed to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda.
- In the context of widening inequalities, and given that it is at the local level that inclusion and service provision take place and there is greater awareness of opportunities, local and religious leaders, civil society and the private sector should work together at the local level.

### 3. Pandemic situations require innovative and effective crisis response measures

#### Overview

Eighteen months into the pandemic at the time that this event took place, the time had come to assess what had worked and what could work better, particularly in countries that faced numerous issues in addition to COVID-19. It was necessary to understand the way in which humanitarian assistance was provided, the way IDPs and migrants had become more vulnerable, and the way humanitarian settings and innovative ways of delivering aid were used.

#### Discussion

COVID-19 had overwhelmed health systems around the globe and threatened greater devastation as it spread to fragile and crisis-affected countries. In the face of an unprecedented threat, governments had understandably followed the models of those countries hit first by COVID-19. Many had swiftly adopted measures like lockdowns and strict travel restrictions. For migrants, living conditions in developing countries made social distancing nearly impossible. Most could not work from home, and governments were unable to provide sufficient relief packages or social safety nets, particularly in fragile economic, security and political environments. As the United Nations Secretary-General declared when the Organization launched its Comprehensive Response to COVID-19, “The COVID-19 pandemic is more than a health crisis; it is an economic crisis, a humanitarian crisis, a security crisis, and a human rights crisis” that highlighted “severe fragilities and inequalities within and among nations. Coming out of this crisis will require a whole-of-society, whole-of-government and whole-of-the-world approach driven by compassion and solidarity.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> United Nations: COVID-19 Response. Available at [www.un.org/en/coronavirus/UN-response](http://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/UN-response).

While some progress had been made to improve the integration of migrants in host countries in the previous ten years, even in the face of increased migrant flows, some of those gains could be erased by the pandemic and its economic fallout. The participants discussed the pandemic's impact on crisis response measures and inter-agency humanitarian planning, to gain insight into on-the-ground realities and identify more effective ways to help migrants and IDPs live a life of dignity.

Several speakers on various panels spoke of the specific challenges faced by their countries and gave examples of the adjustments made to preparedness programmes and the mode of delivering humanitarian assistance during the pandemic, notably in terms of planning, inclusion of migrants and access to personal protective equipment and vaccines. Ceyda Dumlupinar Guntay said that the main objective of Turkish Red Crescent community-based migration programmes was to ensure the psychological, social and economic well-being of all vulnerable groups in a community, to foster social resilience and to develop a cohesive co-habitation culture. To that end, the Turkish Red Crescent carried out post-crisis assistance, recovery and development activities via community centres and other points of intervention. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, it had conducted large-scale cash programmes, built COVID-19 centres in the largest migrant population centres and developed programmes for migrant children. Its programmes and initiatives in different sectors had reached over 3 million migrants and refugees, providing them with information on legal rights and humanitarian services, Turkish language courses, vocational training, personal and group psychological support activities, drug treatment services, drama/music classes and other activities for children and young people, health information and referrals, information meetings for women, handicraft and dressmaking classes, arts and design courses, employment referrals, protection, etc.<sup>15</sup> It being difficult to target communities in rural areas owing to the lack of Internet access (75 per cent of migrants could not access online education), the Turkish Red Crescent had urged mobile communication companies to facilitate access for vulnerable groups.

On the same topic, Md. Mohsin, noting that Bangladesh was one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world and host to almost 1 million Rohingya refugees, said that the COVID-19 epidemic could have

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<sup>15</sup> For more information on the Turkish Red Crescent, see [www.kizilay.org.tr/](http://www.kizilay.org.tr/).

far-reaching consequences in refugee settlements, requiring substantial increases in health-care capacity and infrastructure that exceeded what was currently feasible. Together with United Nations agencies and rights groups, the Bangladeshi Government had arranged for health services to be made available to refugees. It had organized vaccination campaigns and COVID-19 testing facilities in the settlements, and a campaign to regularize the more than 30,000 children born there every year. Cécile Riallant added that some cities had also adapted their preparedness plans with a view to assisting migrants during the pandemic through inclusion. Beirut, for example, had trialed mobile COVID-19 testing centres to reach people, including migrants; others made sure that people looking for health information or children receiving online education could access those resources in their native languages. Portugal and other countries had extended temporary visas or regularization processes to ensure that migrants were able to access services without fear of barriers or discrimination.

It was the poorest and most disadvantaged people worldwide who were most at risk, particularly in least developed countries, as noted by representatives of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Lebanon, Peru and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Diego Beltrand (IOM) gave the example of the impact of COVID-19 on Venezuelan migrants and refugees, many of whom worked in the informal economy and had lost their jobs, health and social security coverage, homes and access to education, and most of whom had few options for social distancing. Growing numbers were leaving the country by irregular means, putting themselves in great danger, including in host countries, where they could be victims of human trafficking. In response, the host countries had adopted emergency policies: extension and/or automatic renewal of visa/residence permits (Peru, Ecuador); the suspension of evictions (Colombia, Argentina); a universal subsidy for vulnerable people (Brazil); and the inclusion of health professionals in national responses to advance regularization processes (Peru, Argentina). IOM had similarly adapted its operations, providing humanitarian assistance, deploying the Displacement Tracking Matrix, supporting integration and regularization, strengthening and supporting local governments, setting up a regional fund to assist victims of trafficking, building capacities, reinforcing Venezuelan diaspora organizations and engaging in migration health programming.

The latter comprised increases in the number of health facilities and the establishment of centres for migrants and refugees subject to lockdowns and other restrictions.

The participants stressed that it was important to understand how humanitarian assistance was provided during the pandemic, and how humanitarian settings and innovative ways of delivering aid were used. Christian Mulamba, noting that the International Medical Corps had been providing lifesaving medical assistance in the Central African Republic, especially in remote and underserved areas, since 2007,<sup>16</sup> said that the ongoing conflict there, floods, the spread of crop diseases and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and related containment measures were exacerbating acute food insecurity. COVID-19-related movement restrictions had further reduced livelihood opportunities and spurred rises in staple food prices. IDPs faced huge challenges in that situation, their “regular” crisis compounded by COVID-19 containment measures that restricted access to livelihood opportunities and contributed to supply shortages. (COVID-19-related supply chain disruptions had resulted in a 10 to 30 % increase in the price of some staple foods, further eroding the purchasing power of vulnerable households). In response, the International Medical Corps was providing life-saving services in health facilities, including hospitals, and through mobile medical clinics at IDP sites and in hard-to-reach conflict-affected areas. Its health partners were providing medicines, medical supplies and basic equipment, and training community health workers to support the provision of community-based maternal and child health-care services, among other activities.

Governments needed to secure the health and safety of all essential workers and maintain spending on integration to help migrants continue to contribute to society and the economy. Several speakers from the floor spoke of the specific challenges faced by their countries, including Armenia, Ecuador, the United States of America and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and called for national COVID-19 response programmes to be migrant-inclusive. They concluded that all migrants, irrespective of their status, should have equal access to health care, including vaccines. Mutual acceptance of COVID-19 health certificates was crucial to avoid a potential global mobility divide. They also emphasized that the COVID-19

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<sup>16</sup> For more information on the International Medical Corps, see [www.internationalmedicalcorps.org/](http://www.internationalmedicalcorps.org/).

pandemic disproportionately affected the most vulnerable countries, communities and individuals, refracting all the forms of economic and social inequality that had always existed and which were now becoming amplified. To the extent that migration was crucial to the economy and the labour market, the current crisis was also a broader challenge for any society and required urgent pragmatic, human and community-minded responses.

## Recommendations

- National regularization procedures should be standardized.
- Governments should ratify and apply international human rights instruments, to safeguard the rights of the most vulnerable populations, particularly in migration crises, where migrants are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking and people smuggling.
- Steps should be taken to foster deeper understanding of and insights into realities on the ground, in order to come up with more effective ways of helping migrants and IDPs live a life of dignity.
- Spaces and opportunities should be provided for migrants to develop creative responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, including with a view to longer-term recovery.
- Entrepreneurship, new forms of flexible funding, the engagement of the private sector and the creation of new resources should be encouraged, to support the livelihoods of the most vulnerable.
- As data sharing is vital in crisis situations, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, and central to understanding what is going on in the field, investment in digitalization should be encouraged, with due regard for data privacy and data security.

## 4. Migrants must be empowered to develop creative responses for the post-COVID-19 recovery and accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

### Overview

The extraordinary mobility restrictions enforced around the world to control the transmission of COVID-19 have had an immediate and potentially long-term impact on the attainment of many of the SDGs. The ability to develop responses that mitigate the negative impacts, protect people on the move and their communities, and harness the positive power of migration for recovering better, as called for in the United Nations framework for the immediate response to the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19, requires a sound understanding of the effects of the pandemic on human mobility and development. Over the two days, the participants – including migrant and diaspora representatives – emphasized the key role of migrants and the diaspora in the recovery and achievement of the 2030 Agenda, presenting their direct experience of how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their work.

### Discussion

The participants considered that pandemic recovery efforts offered a major opportunity to build back better and promote a more sustainable, climate-resilient and migrant-inclusive society and economy. Rooted in the 2030 Agenda, the Global Compact for Migration provided a roadmap out of the pandemic and towards an economy that left no one behind and instead enabled all migrants to make vital financial, social, cultural and economic contributions to communities. Migrants would be key partners in the recovery process and accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda. During the pandemic, many migrants had been “essential workers”, keeping the food production, health and care sectors afloat. Enhancing regular

pathways for migrants to access decent work, including by protecting their rights, ensuring ethical recruitment and guaranteeing access to vaccination and health care, would protect them as well as enable them to support a more inclusive and productive economy. Similarly, the remittances sent by migrants and members of the diaspora had been crucial lifelines during the pandemic, defying World Bank projections by remaining resilient and in some regions increasing. Governments could leverage the opportunities and benefits of migration to empower them as equal partners and development agents. Failure to do so meant that migrants would remain at the risk of being left behind, resulting in widening inequalities and further threatening progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

Many speakers emphasized the need for a migrant-inclusive approach to sustainable development. It was fundamental to leverage the capacities and contributions of migrants, young people and women as agents of change, in order to ensure the success of collective efforts through a whole-of-society, inclusive, rights-based and gender-responsive approach. Migrants and the diaspora made communities at home and abroad more vibrant, inclusive and successful, and the participants gave many examples throughout the two-day session of the positive role that migrants continued to play in supporting local economies or providing critical services during the COVID-19 pandemic (see pages 16–17).

### *Empowering migrant women*

Migrants, women, young people and children were directly, and often disproportionately, affected by all crises. Policies and measures implemented on the ground had a direct impact on them, but often failed to take into account their particular needs and capacities. It was important to remember that migrant women were the backbone of society; they had played a key part in the pandemic response and were major contributors to the economy and to cultural diversity, in countries of origin and of destination. For Diana Echeverria (El Salvador), the negative impact of COVID-19 required a holistic approach to ensure that migratory processes were not left out. Of the more than 3 million Salvadorans living abroad, 49.12 per cent were women, who sent more of their earnings home in the form of remittances than men. Her Government had therefore mainstreamed the gender perspective into its approach to migration, which prioritized protection and access to rights. That said, the



potential of Salvadoran women in terms of development and economic growth went beyond remittances, also encompassing knowledge and skills transfers.

Women's experience, skills, resourcefulness and resilience could greatly contribute to post-pandemic recovery efforts and to achievement of the SDGs, especially since women accounted for 70 per cent of the global health workforce.<sup>17</sup> Dina Nuryati (Indonesian Migrant Worker Union) gave many examples throughout the session of the positive role that women had played in supporting local economies and providing critical services during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, however, the pandemic had taken an especially heavy toll on migrant women working in informal sectors without strong legal protection. The International Cooperation and Research Division of the Indonesian Migrant Worker Union had therefore acted to organize them, informing them of their rights, strengthening their economic empowerment through cooperative-based work and bolstering their resilience during the pandemic. Women migrant workers faced many problems during the pandemic: unpaid salaries and other forms of wage theft; no holidays or reduced rest periods; documentation confiscated by employers; vulnerability to fraud by brokers and agencies; a higher psychological burden brought on by the extreme fatigue resulting from longer hours and heavier workloads, employers working from home or their children studying from home; returning home with no job; and the stigma that migrants were carriers of the virus. Women and girls had to develop additional skills, learn to use technology and engage in online education; for a truly inclusive pandemic recovery, women migrants needed innovative education and vocational training. Access to basic services at home and in their neighbourhoods had a significant impact on their health, education, employment and integration.

The delegate from Guinea, speaking from the floor, underlined the importance of working hand in hand with other stakeholders, including the United Nations, government representatives and the private sector, on COVID-19 response and recovery plans and on women's inclusion. The COVID-19 crisis and the ensuing border restrictions had had a negative socioeconomic impact on Guinean border communities and on the livelihoods of vulnerable households relying on small and informal

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<sup>17</sup> UN-Women, How COVID-19 impacts women and girls (last updated 17 March 2021). Available at <https://interactive.unwomen.org/multimedia/explainer/covid19/en/index.html>.

businesses. The widespread vulnerability of the population, particularly women, children and migrant workers, limited the capacity of cross-border communities to overcome the ill effects of the pandemic. In that context, IOM and UNDP had together run workshops and training sessions for 433 people, including 200 women (entrepreneurs, cooperatives) and 105 young people, on the design of business concepts enabling them to improve their income-generating activities, generate savings and access credit.

Two speakers, Amina Hersi Moghe and Fridah Ntarangwi, presented their experiences of the positive role that migrant women continued to play in supporting local economies or providing critical services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Amina Hersi Moghe described how the Atiak Sugar factory aimed to support vulnerable populations and empower women (see page 17). Fridah Ntarangwi said that her organization, Zidicircle, aimed to enable the diaspora/migrants and diverse start-ups to scale across Europe and Africa by providing access to funding, workshops, training and coaching. It had established an online entrepreneurship programme at the start of the pandemic to empower migrants, especially women migrants, to launch businesses in the European Union or in their countries of origin. The majority worked for years to save the money to start a business, forgoing many opportunities in the process. It was hard for entrepreneurs to be between the host country and the country of origin. Specific attention should be paid to gender, because migrant women had worse labour participation outcomes owing to cultural norms, their family responsibilities, their level of education and language barriers – and yet they constituted an untapped potential to boost an ecosystem that was different from traditional entrepreneurship. Zidicircle helped change the narrative of migration and build the capacity of women migrants by connecting them with established women migrant entrepreneurs, with a view to facilitating social inclusion and boosting economic potential.

Delegates from Colombia and from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, speaking from the floor, underlined the critical role played by migrant workers in countries of destination as domestic carers, nurses and doctors; at the same time, migrants had been excluded from access to adequate health care and from vaccination campaigns. In a video message, Marta-Lucía Ramírez, Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Colombia, said that women, girls and young people in particular were directly, and often disproportionately, affected by economic/health crises and by measures implemented on the ground. In parallel, women, children, irregular migrants and victims of trafficking found themselves particularly

at risk. In that regard, governments and the private sector should work hand in hand to empower migrant women to harness their potential for the development of their communities. Caroline Caporossi spoke about the need to invest in cultural mediators when building bridges between the community and the job market, as such cultural mediators were a key element of long-term partnerships. In January 2021, her Association had opened Roots, a unique social enterprise business model that aimed to train more than 16 women each year and be the first multi-ethnic restaurant in Modena, Italy, dedicated to celebrating cultural and human capital. Moreover, the pandemic had revealed the need for additional skills – the ability to use technology, engage in online training, and meet health and safety regulations – from which women with low literacy levels were precluded; investment was needed to bridge that gap. Her Association had found that local job training opportunities typically did not include non-technical or other skills that were factors of long-term success, and had therefore included training in financial literacy, communication skills, public speaking, and so on, in its programming.

### *Empowering migrant youth*

Young people and children were also often among those who suffered most from the adverse effects of the pandemic. Many migrant young people had been left stranded by COVID-19, living in dire conditions, without education. Homeless youth, those not in employment, education or training, young workers engaged in the informal economy or with an irregular migration status – all had been particularly affected by the pandemic. Wen Li (IOM), in opening the panel discussion on youth, said that young migrants were deprived of the safety nets that helped many others sustain disruptions to livelihoods and adapt. Even before the crisis, transitioning to adulthood and accessing quality education, decent jobs and affordable housing had been a challenge for new generations of young people. Millennials (Generation Y), zoomers (Generation Z) and now Generation Alpha were all finding it harder to get a start in life than their parents before them.

As many participants emphasized, migration offered many young people a means of overcoming their difficulties and pursuing a pathway to a higher income, better education and access to more comfortable lives. Lack of experience or reliable information, and insufficient legal channels for migration, nonetheless meant that young migrants had to take

unprecedented risks, suffering dire rights abuses and often losing their lives in the process. It was therefore important to have migrant youth-sensitive policies and responses in the context of migration governance, but also in other areas, such as employment, education and entrepreneurship. School closures had affected all children and young people, but distance learning was exacerbating existing inequalities. As Caroline Caporossi pointed out, children and young people from marginalized and poorer households, such as many migrants, might not have access to the necessary digital technologies. Migrant children and young people who were out of school during the pandemic also risked dropping out or lagging behind in terms of language learning. They might be deprived of the support of their parents, who might themselves still be adapting to the receiving country or working during the pandemic.

Organizations such as the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth presented their work to create a more engaged community, one in which young people could interact on a centralized platform that facilitated advocacy and partnerships, and ensured that their voices were heard at all levels, including at the United Nations. They described ways in which young people could be helped to participate more effectively and play a role in the post-pandemic recovery, including through the creation of a needs and qualification framework for highly skilled migrants; education for migrants, especially young migrant women; and financial support and protection for young migrants. Many youth organizations around the world were on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19, actively engaged in building a more sustainable future at local, national and global level, and interesting examples were given of policies, programmes and initiatives aimed at involving a range of stakeholders, including migrants, young people and women. Sagyntai uulu Arstanbek, for example, said that a youth network for development and training centres at mountain pastures supported by the Roza Otunbayeva Initiative was promoting investment in future generations, unity in diversity, democratic governance and sustainable development. The Initiative had implemented over 35 projects across Kyrgyzstan in partnership with international donor organizations, eight in connection with migration issues, and over 100,000 people had benefited from efforts to create the conditions for the children of rural inhabitants, migrants and cattle breeders to have equal access to education.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> For more information on the Roza Otunbayeva Initiative, see [www.roza.kg/en/initiative/fund-activities](http://www.roza.kg/en/initiative/fund-activities).

Both Sagyntai uulu Arstanbek and Minh Nguyen (UNMGCY) said that migrant youth were doubly at risk of labour exploitation, as migrants and as young people. Young people were more likely to find themselves unemployed during the pandemic, as they often worked in the informal economy, in temporary jobs and in the sectors most impacted by it – as did many migrants, who were thus more vulnerable to labour exploitation. Migrant opportunities were also heavily dependent on access to safe and affordable housing. Financial barriers and discrimination resulted in greater residential segregation and further entrenched inequalities. Social and economic outcomes were jeopardized by the limited access to resources and reduced job prospects in areas with few quality jobs and adult education possibilities, and by employer biases against those from poor or ethnic/racially segregated neighbourhoods.

Young people had the greatest potential in terms of creativity, resilience and innovation, making them compelling partners for an effective and sustainable long-term recovery. According to Rasika Jayasuriya (UNICEF), they should be invited to dialogues like the IDM and included in policymaking discussions. It was important to hear and promote the voices of young people, to involve them actively in decision-making processes and to leverage their contributions in support of decent employment opportunities, local development and resilience. UNICEF had developed an innovative initiative to modernize education, seizing the moment for positive disruption and change. In the midst of the pandemic, it had launched the “Reimagine Education” programme to find world-class digital solutions and provide digital learning opportunities all over the world.<sup>19</sup>

Speakers agreed that young people were engines of change, a solution to development. Member States and their partners had to create their own conditions to support young people and involve them in decision-making processes, in order to harness their inventiveness and creativity. They should take action to address the challenges faced by young migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic and empower youth to facilitate sustainable recovery. The Government of Chad, for example, had strengthened the missions of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Promotion of Entrepreneurship and the Ministry of Vocational Training and Trades. Several strategies had been implemented to facilitate the contribution of youth to the country’s development and to promote the values of peace,

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<sup>19</sup> For more information on the “Reimagine Education” programme, see [www.unicef.org/reimagine/education](http://www.unicef.org/reimagine/education).

work, democracy and solidarity. A delegate from Madagascar commended IOM's "Look Forward Give Back" initiative, which shared the stories of young people from the Malagasy diaspora who had travelled back to Madagascar to work together with local communities on development projects. The initiative's innovative format helped encourage other young diaspora community members to get involved in development activities in their country of origin. In the same vein, a delegate from Ireland said that Irish Aid and IOM had launched the Global Migration and Media Academy for journalists and communication students in December 2020, to tackle the spread of misinformation and xenophobia in the media. One of the Academy's main objectives was to equip students of journalism and media worldwide with the online tools, contextual knowledge and ethical standards they needed to report fully on migration in the fast-evolving information age.<sup>20</sup>

## Recommendations

- The voices of migrants, women, young people and marginalized communities must be brought forward in major global and regional forums, and their inclusion in key policy processes and implementation efforts promoted.
- Recognition of the key role played by migrants and members of the diaspora as agents of change must be promoted, notably the way in which they enrich society and contribute to economic development in countries of destination and origin.
- Governments and the private sector should work hand in hand to empower migrant women so as to harness their potential for the development of their communities.
- Capacity-building activities should target young people, including migrant youth, to help them develop adaptable digital skills, with a view to building resilience in labour markets affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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<sup>20</sup> For more information on the Irish Aid/IOM Global Migration and Media Academy, see [www.iom.int/news/irish-aid-iom-launch-global-media-academy-tackle-misinformation-migration](http://www.iom.int/news/irish-aid-iom-launch-global-media-academy-tackle-misinformation-migration).

- Better understanding should be fostered of how to link labour market needs to educational possibilities and how labour and student mobility considerations fit in with this.
- Resilience and adaptability should be built in a world undergoing constant change as a result of digitalization, COVID-19 and climate change, which have steadily affected the way in which people work and move.
- Inclusive lifelong learning approaches and flexible skills-building, recognition of qualifications and re-skilling, for example to help people transition from carbon-based to green jobs, should be made the new norm.
- Efforts to innovate education and vocational training should not overlook the groups most often left behind, from women and girls to youth and the diaspora, as it is important to build a truly inclusive pandemic recovery.
- Student mobility should be rekindled, as it is crucial not only for the students themselves, but also for sustaining educational systems and training the future work force.
- Collaboration should be encouraged between youth and other stakeholders, including the United Nations, government entities and the private sector, so as to identify and advocate ways to foster young people's contributions to the development of youth-friendly policies and programmes, particularly through national projects and programmes, for example as part of United Nations country teams.
- Young people should become active participants in designing programmes, policies and initiatives addressing their situation, thereby also promoting peer-to-peer support networks.
- Opportunities should be made for migrant women to participate in policymaking on issues that affect their lives and educational opportunities for migrant women and girls improved so that they can contribute their skills and efforts to the global economic recovery.

## 5. A more comprehensive approach is needed to the role of transnational communities and remittances

### Overview

The second session of the 2021 IDM laid the common ground for a practice-oriented discussion between global leaders and experts on migrants' contributions to development, in particular remittances, and drew renewed attention to the importance of supporting migrant and diaspora contributions through financial inclusion, improved financial market infrastructure to help reduce transaction costs, digitalization, better data on migrant contributions to help define policy responses, and broader diaspora engagement policy and regulatory frameworks.

### Discussion

While all remittance-receiving families and countries had suffered socioeconomically during the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact had been especially harsh in at least 60 middle- and low-income countries that were most reliant on remittances (in which the remittances-to-GDP ratio exceeded 5 %). In countries such as Haiti, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, South Sudan and Tonga, where remittances represented at least 30 per cent of GDP, the economic and social implications were even more damaging, reducing access to food, health, clothing, housing and education. Poor households were losing a lifeline, as remittances represented on average up to 60 per cent of a recipient family's income, and typically more than double its disposable income.<sup>21</sup> That said, migrants engaged with communities in other areas as well, beyond remittances and financial

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<sup>21</sup> For more information, see United Nations Network on Migration/IFAD, The impact of COVID-19 on family remittances: a lifeline cut for migrant families, policy brief (n.d.). Available at [https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbdl416/files/policy\\_brief\\_remittances\\_in\\_the\\_time\\_of\\_covid-19.pdf](https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbdl416/files/policy_brief_remittances_in_the_time_of_covid-19.pdf).



transfers, as reflected in the broader concept of migrant contributions set out in Objective 19 of the Global Compact for Migration. Marina Manke (IOM) stressed that, in taking stock of the lessons learned about engaging with transnational communities during the pandemic, it was necessary to review the progress made since IOM had convened the first Diaspora Ministerial Conference in 2013<sup>22</sup> and to pave the way for coordination and initiatives looking ahead to the forthcoming International Migration Review Forum. IOM recognized the importance of working further to address the challenges related to migrant remittances, given the critical role they played for so many households and communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic had demonstrated that transnational communities were able to adjust quickly and mobilize resources to assist the most vulnerable or those left behind. However, as Veronica Studsgaard (International Association of Money Transfer Networks) said, “Remittances are not resilient; it is the migrants behind the remittances that are resilient.” Remittances were an important source of revenues for many countries, and the reduction in international financial flows resulting from the COVID-19 crisis was having a devastating effect on local communities and economies and on individual households. Governments and their partners therefore attached great importance to keeping remittances flowing, as reflected in the Swiss-UK Call to Action launched in May 2020<sup>23</sup> and the blueprint for action developed by the multistakeholder initiative, the Remittance Community Task Force.<sup>24</sup> The Task Force provided a platform for sharing experiences and proposing ways to move forward. Leon Isaacs (DMA) added that, although it had been widely anticipated that remittances would drop steeply in 2020 – the World Bank had forecast a drop of 20 per cent in April 2020<sup>25</sup> – they had in fact proven to be resilient and continued to provide an important buffer against extreme poverty, loss of livelihoods and the inability to pay for medical treatment. Several speakers noted that the IOM publication

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<sup>22</sup> See [note 5](#).

<sup>23</sup> See [www.admin.ch/gov/en/start/documentation/media-releases.msg-id-79217.html](http://www.admin.ch/gov/en/start/documentation/media-releases.msg-id-79217.html).

<sup>24</sup> *Remittances in Crisis: Response, Recovery, Resilience: Blueprint for Action* is a report outlining a set of immediate and short-term measures to address the challenges faced by migrant workers and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic. Available at <https://gfrid.org/covid-19/blueprint-for-action/>.

<sup>25</sup> World Bank, *World Bank Predicts Sharpest Decline of Remittances in Recent History*, 22 April 2020. Available at [www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/22/world-bank-predicts-sharpest-decline-of-remittances-in-recent-history](http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/22/world-bank-predicts-sharpest-decline-of-remittances-in-recent-history).

*Contributions and Counting*<sup>26</sup> provided guidance for governments and national authorities looking to understand and measure the economic contributions – beyond remittances – made by the diaspora to the country of origin in terms of investment, trade, tourism and philanthropy.

The pandemic had prompted most public authorities to implement a number of temporary measures. There had been positive responses, often taken in coordination with the private sector, and they had helped build resilience in the short term and promoted overdue structural changes in the remittance market, with regulators adapting existing frameworks to the current situation. Measures to facilitate the use of mobile payments, including fee waivers, lower charges on payment infrastructure, and/or higher limits, had been introduced in many African countries (e.g. Egypt, Ghana, Kenya and Zambia).<sup>27</sup> On the same topic, Leon Isaacs gave examples of migrant contributions beyond remittances. In Pakistan for instance, the Government was offering an incentive package to overseas Pakistanis, to encourage them to use banking channels to transfer remittances. It had also introduced a banking facility for digital investment and savings, the Roshan Digital Account, to help non-resident Pakistanis anywhere in the world and to allow members of the diaspora to invest and support the country. The results had been impressive: in the first 12 months, over USD 2 billion had been placed through the facility. In the Philippines, the Government had issued Progreso treasury bonds to overseas Filipinos using a mobile app, encouraging them to invest with a view to funding government action for COVID-19 response and recovery. Small investors accounted for 80 per cent of all transactions. In Somalia, a fund worth USD 500 million had been launched to drive entrepreneurial development, not just during the time of COVID-19 but also to help educate young people and thereby increase literacy rates.

A more comprehensive approach was needed to migrant contributions, encompassing diaspora investment and philanthropy, tourism and transnational networks, and migrant entrepreneurship and trade, as set out in Objective 19 of the Global Compact. Speakers drew attention to the importance of encouraging migrants and diaspora communities to

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<sup>26</sup> IOM, *Contributions and Counting: Guidance on Measuring the Economic Impact of Your Diaspora beyond Remittances* (Geneva, 2020). Available at <https://publications.iom.int/books/contributions-and-counting-guidance-measuring-economic-impact-your-diaspora-beyond-remittances>.

<sup>27</sup> For more information, see <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/>.

contribute by providing assistance for financial inclusion, enhancing financial market infrastructure to help reduce transaction costs, and digitalization. In the words of Gerardo Pérez (El Salvador), “How can we not support our diaspora? As a country, throughout our history, we have given them so little, but they respond by giving us so much.” Broader diaspora engagement policies and regulatory frameworks should also be established. Leon Isaacs stressed the relevance of looking beyond remittances when measuring the impact of economic contributions from diasporas, noting that countries needed to introduce structured approaches and specific policies that encouraged and rewarded migrants’ contributions.

The participants agreed on the need to continue working with national and private partners to address remittance-related challenges, in line with Objective 20 of the Global Compact. Even though policymakers increasingly focused on migrant remittances and broader migrant contributions, governments worldwide had not had much to say on Objectives 19 and 20 in their voluntary reviews. Gerardo Pérez reported that El Salvador, where remittances had increased to USD 5.9 billion in 2020, was drafting legislation aimed at inciting the banking sector to include the diaspora by making it easier to invest. The pandemic had also had an impact in terms of financial inclusion: the 70 per cent of Salvadorans who did not have a bank account before the pandemic had been forced during the lockdown to open one for electronic transactions.

Somalia, which officially had one of the lowest COVID-19 death rates, had nonetheless been affected by the ripple effects of the current global economy and observed a decline in remittances to households as a direct result of the pandemic. The number of remittances had on average decreased by 61 per cent, for an average reduction per remittance of USD 289.<sup>28</sup> The senders nevertheless remained committed to supporting their relatives, even if it meant sending a lesser amount. They had been able to continue remitting thanks to the support of their families (spouses and children) and by drawing on savings and government (social welfare) support. Abdifatah Diriye said that the Federal Government of Somalia, in response to the decline in remittances, was working to engage the diaspora in the country’s development, as reductions in remittances

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<sup>28</sup> For more information on the subject, see IOM, *COVID-19 and the State of Remittance Flows to Somalia* (Somalia, August 2020). Available at [www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/press\\_release/file/covid-19\\_and\\_the\\_state\\_of\\_remittance\\_flow\\_to\\_somalia\\_-\\_iom\\_somalia\\_august\\_2020.pdf](http://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/press_release/file/covid-19_and_the_state_of_remittance_flow_to_somalia_-_iom_somalia_august_2020.pdf).

would directly affect household incomes and overall food security. Under its preparedness and response plan for COVID-19, which underlined the need to facilitate remittances in order to sustain households that relied on them as their main source of income, the Government would work with United Nations agencies, including IOM, to facilitate and reduce the cost of such financial transactions.

Over the two days, the participants often mentioned the importance of leveraging the opportunities represented by migrants and of empowering them as equal development partners. They highlighted the importance of data but also noted that governments had to a great extent failed to measure progress on Objectives 19 and 20 of the Global Compact – at the risk of leaving migrants behind, widening inequalities and cutting off any chance of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A representative of Azerbaijan, speaking from the floor, added that there was a need to discuss further how such an important part of the migration and development agenda, namely Objectives 19 and 20, could best be reflected at the International Migration Review Forum and beyond. Strengthening international cooperation and global partnerships were key commitments under the Global Compact, in particular Objective 20(b), which encouraged action to promote and support the International Day of Family Remittances<sup>29</sup> and the IFAD Global Forum on Remittances, Investment and Development<sup>30</sup> as important platforms to build and strengthen partnerships for innovative solutions on cheaper, faster and safer transfers of remittances with all relevant stakeholders.

## Recommendations

- Implementation and application must be ensured of key international instruments, such as the Global Compact for Migration and the International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

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<sup>29</sup> For more information on the International Day of Family Remittances, see [www.un.org/en/observances/remittances-day/](http://www.un.org/en/observances/remittances-day/).

<sup>30</sup> For more information on the Global Forum, see [www.ifad.org/en/global-forum-on-remittances](http://www.ifad.org/en/global-forum-on-remittances).

- Recognition should be promoted of the key role that migrants and members of the diaspora play as agents of change, notably the way in which they enrich society and contribute to economic development in their countries of destination and origin.
- Steps should be taken to ensure service continuity and access to remittances for those who rely on them the most, and to support the efforts of Member States and other stakeholders to implement the Global Compact for Migration.
- Migration policy should reflect the positive impact of diasporas.
- Collaborative engagement should be promoted among public authorities and diaspora groups in host and home countries, so as to gather and disseminate the data needed to design programmes that make a difference and encourage diaspora members to support their country of origin.
- Broader diaspora engagement should be fostered in policies and regulatory frameworks.
- The focus should be on strong and sustainable partnerships between all stakeholders, including private players.
- Migrant and diaspora contributions should be supported through financial inclusion, improved financial market infrastructure to help reduce transaction costs, and digitalization.

## 6. Looking ahead to the first International Migration Review Forum, the IDM will play a key role in promoting the use of evidence and best practices in Global Compact implementation

### Overview

The Global Compact for Migration integrates a follow-up and review process including a quadrennial global review process – the International Migration Review Forum – to advance implementation. The first such Forum is to take place in May 2022. Under United Nations General Assembly resolution 73/326, the IDM is invited “to contribute to each forum by providing relevant data, evidence, best practices, innovative approaches and recommendations as they relate to the implementation of the Global Compact”. Looking ahead to the 2022 IDM, the participants underscored the significance of the first Forum as an opportunity to set the tone and direction; the role of the preparatory process in making it successful and meaningful; and, as part of the preparations, the importance of contributions through the IDM as IOM’s principal platform for policy debate.

### Discussion

As emerged from the discussions at this session and during previous IDM sessions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migration management, countries had advanced in integrating the Global Compact into their national planning despite the significant challenges posed by the pandemic. The challenges to human mobility and socioeconomic development had underscored the centrality of cooperation at all levels and between all stakeholders, which had been actively involved at national, regional and global level and participated in Global Compact regional

reviews processes. Such global issues, on which attainment of the SDGs depended, could not be dealt with by countries individually. In the words of the IOM Director General, “We need to recognize the necessity to be prepared and it means involving all governments and societies, between countries, sectors, the economy, between national and local authorities and also at UN level.”

The session’s participants noted that local, national and regional stakeholders had played a particularly important role in translating global commitments into action and in addressing local challenges and the needs and vulnerabilities of migrant populations. Moreover, resolving the complex challenges associated with migration and health required multilateral efforts and cooperation on the implementation of global frameworks. Sanjay Bhattacharya said that the Indian Government had drafted a proposal for multilateral action that comprised a collaborative project on data-informed and migrant-centred approaches. It was also promoting gender-sensitive strategies in line with the IOM Migration Governance Framework and the United Nations-wide Gender Parity Strategy. Multilateral and bilateral cooperation was essential, and governments should provide an enabling environment for worker mobility and acknowledge the contribution made by migrants. India sought to align itself with core aspects of the Global Compact through multiple initiatives, including the Migration Act currently under review. It had developed an online platform, eMigrate, to ensure safe employment abroad for Indian migrant workers.<sup>31</sup> The portal allowed foreign employers worldwide to source talent. It also provided pre-departure orientation, particularly for migrant workers who were unskilled or semi-skilled, giving them soft skills in terms of culture, welfare measures, etc.

José Luis Pardo Cuerdo said that Spain was preparing a comprehensive progress report on its implementation of the Global Compact. The report was a living document and as such constantly being updated; it constituted the reference for relevant national ministries and departments on implementation of each of the Compact’s 23 objectives. In terms of the discussions at the first International Migration Review Forum and the IDM sessions preceding it, consideration should be given to the ongoing migratory challenges that the pandemic had made more visible but had not created and that required action in both the short and the longer

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<sup>31</sup> For further information, see <https://web.umang.gov.in/landing/department/emigrate.html>.

term. The Forum would be an excellent opportunity to forge a broader global consensus on migration.

Christine O'Dwyer (European Union) observed that the Global Compact was an achievement of multilateralism that adopted a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach to the global challenges currently facing the international community and called for global solutions based on solidarity, human rights and a rules-based international order. Those principles were mirrored in the European Union's work to support the Global Compact's implementation, which was enshrined in the European Commission's New Pact on Migration and Asylum. The Pact proposed a new strategy aimed at building a more reliable, efficient and fair migration system in the European Union. In line with the Global Compact objectives, the European Union recognized the importance of building partnerships with countries of origin, transit and destination. It was working to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on migration as part of its internal and external response to the pandemic and was committed to supporting the efforts spearheaded by the United Nations Secretary-General to coordinate a United Nations-wide response.

As evidenced by the examples shared by the other participants in this session, regional partnerships and dialogue were key to implementation of global frameworks and the development of instruments more adapted to regional contexts. Examples of regional approaches included efforts to promote cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination on regional migration dynamics. Indeed, as the representative of Libya recalled, the migration phenomenon impacted many IOM Member States and they had to work together and come up with a collective, concise and comprehensive approach that addressed governance, development and security. This meant going beyond existing partnerships and finding innovative ways to collaborate.

Closer to the ground, national and local agents played a particularly important part in addressing COVID-19 related challenges, needs and vulnerabilities. Around the world, examples were multiplying of national efforts aimed at strengthening the evidence base, designing solutions for migrants and temporary protection mechanisms, and mobilizing partnerships to face the pandemic, offering an opportunity for replication and experience-sharing. The participants provided numerous examples of effective national practices and shared their experiences of them. A delegate from Thailand, for example, said that his country had contributed



to the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund and was a Global Compact champion. It would work closely with the Regional UN Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific and considered the International Migration Review Forum an important opportunity to identify gaps and build on experiences and best practices, in order to shape the direction of its endeavours. No single country could manage the complex issue of migration alone and the international community had a shared responsibility in that regard.

Along similar lines, a representative of Canada underscored that gender-responsive migration management was key and asked IOM to share successful practices from different countries. The delegate from Bangladesh reiterated the need to step up Global Compact implementation for effective and inclusive recovery, particularly in countries of destination. As one of the core facilitators of the Forum and a Global Compact champion, Bangladesh placed great importance on this. It asked IOM and the United Nations Network on Migration to identify the structural challenges to achievement of the Global Compact objectives. A delegate from Mexico said that his country had participated in the active review of regional processes and was carrying out different exercises to implement the Global Compact. It had identified broader opportunities, especially in terms of training, to address the needs of vulnerable populations. The representative of the Philippines agreed that the Forum was an exceptional opportunity to ground work in key communities: migrants and their home and host communities: “If we do not consider their aspirations, we will only be talking among ourselves.”

IOM Member States requested that the IDM contribute to the Forum, and the last panel considered how best to do that at the first session in 2022. Speakers such as Sanjay Bhattacharya said that the next IDM should encourage discussion of policies prioritizing returns and aligned with development priorities; of how governments could provide an enabling environment for worker mobility; and of the rapidly changing scenarios calling for dynamic responses. Christine O’Dwyer said that the next IDM should provide common ground for intensifying regional and multilateral discussions focusing on youth. In line with the objectives of the Global Compact, the IDM should encourage the voluntary return option and sustainable reintegration, so as to maximize the positive impact and foster safe and orderly migration.

## Recommendations

- Local and national capacity to implement existing policies and tools through global and regional cooperation should be strengthened.
- Cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination on the management of complex migration flows must be strengthened, for example through regional partnerships and initiatives.
- Efforts must be directed towards building local evidence and capacities, to support informed, context-specific and needs-based action.
- Collaboration must be intensified so that all stakeholders speak the same language: scientific evidence from past outbreaks should be made available in a coherent way and used to prepare for future pandemics, as evidence-based policies are essential.
- International cooperation and assistance should be emphasized in terms of “health as one, move as one and recover as one”.
- In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, countries and other stakeholders should partner to facilitate equal distribution of and access to vaccines to all, including migrants and IDPs.
- Countries that had not participated in the Global Compact negotiations should be asked to attend the International Migration Review Forum and contribute to the activities and debate.
- Governments must come to the first International Migration Review Forum with a renewed and constructive global approach.

## CONCLUSIONS

The second session of the 2021 IDM highlighted priority areas for action in the post-COVID-19 recovery. It aimed to improve knowledge of the impacts of global shocks on migration and development, to identify lessons learned and to make recommendations for improving migrant support in the future. The session also acted as a central forum for global policy dialogue, allowing IOM's Member States, observers, partner intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental stakeholders to discuss pressing migration issues in order to advance efforts to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration, and to strengthen migrant-inclusive public health systems, with the ultimate aim of advancing attainment of the SDGs.

In an attempt to contain the spread of the virus, many governments have introduced border closures and/or travel restrictions and lockdowns since March 2020. This has severely affected movements across borders, migrants themselves, and communities in countries of origin. Migrants have been largely overlooked in COVID-19 preparedness and response planning, in particular in crisis settings with fragile or non-existent social systems. In several countries, migrants have not been able to access basic services allowing them to meet their most pressing needs, further exacerbating their vulnerabilities. In addition, diaspora health professionals and migrant workers have played an important part as first responders, and migrants, including women and young people, should be included in post-COVID-19 global recovery efforts.

The session provided an opportunity to exchange views and share examples of good practices, lessons learned and recommendations as the international community works to advance COVID-19 recovery efforts that are inclusive, non-discriminatory and address inequalities. The participants generally agreed that the challenges of the pandemic for human mobility and socioeconomic development could be most effectively

managed through cooperation among all relevant stakeholders, including migrants and the diaspora. All should come together behind a concise and comprehensive approach that addresses governance, development and security. The pandemic has demonstrated that partners can go beyond existing arrangements to build new ties and find innovative ways of working together.

The discussions also showed that particularly close attention must be paid to the role of young people and women in building back better, in line with the United Nations Secretary-General's Our Common Agenda.

The session's participants referenced numerous opportunities at the local, national, regional and international levels to enhance collective action and promote more resilient, sustainable, inclusive and peaceful societies. As the IOM Director General noted in his closing remarks, there is a need for an integrated, whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach to future health emergency preparedness and its impact on border management in the post-pandemic world. There is also a need to adapt global coordination and to take innovative, multidimensional and inclusive action prioritizing prevention, preparedness and the transition to a more sustainable economic model.

The second session of the 2021 IDM provided a common ground for discussion of the pandemic's impact on migration management systems and ways in which governments could work together to respond effectively to similar events in the future. The participants agreed that the 2022 International Migration Review Forum would be an excellent opportunity to advance the global consensus on migration issues and to urge States and international organizations to bring a renewed and constructive global approach to migration. The first session of the 2022 IDM would therefore be dedicated to the exchange of best practices, innovative approaches and recommendations in relation to implementation of the Global Compact.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WAY FORWARD

The discussions during the second session of the 2021 IDM helped to identify several recommendations in relation to the six key messages that emerged as a result. These recommendations are set out below and may be shared and adapted as necessary to inform key policy processes, including the International Migration Review Forum in May 2022.

## **New approaches are needed to human mobility and border management**

- Data should be collected more systematically and disaggregated by migration status, to ensure better understanding of migrant protection needs and challenges in the COVID-19 context and effective support for all migrant populations. Building the evidence base on the impact of COVID-19 on mobility and populations on the move remains a priority in terms of finding effective responses.
- An integrated approach should be adopted that takes holistic account of cross-border mobility and international health regulations. This will require multisectoral whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, with proper coordination between countries and sectors, national and local authorities, and agencies.
- Response and recovery measures should not add to discrimination, stigmatization and inequality, or infringe human rights.
- There should be stronger cooperation to prevent the cross-border spread of COVID-19 and improve global migration governance. One

of the central elements of the resumption of cross-border human mobility is the use of digital health certificates, and their implications for people on the move need to be assessed.

- Comprehensive data on the impact of COVID-19-related movement restrictions on migrants should be collected and analysed, for the purposes of future policy frameworks at national and global level.

## **Pandemic recovery efforts must ensure inclusivity and access to socioeconomic services**

- There should be recognition of the key role that migrants and members of the diaspora played as agents of positive social change, notably the way that they enriched society and contributed to economic development in their countries of origin and destination.
- Commitments made in the Global Compact for Migration regarding safe and non-discriminatory access to health care and all other basic services for migrants must be implemented.
- In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, countries and other stakeholders should partner to facilitate equal distribution of and access to vaccines, particularly for the most vulnerable populations, including migrants and IDPs.
- As part of their COVID-19 recovery efforts, governments should prioritize efforts to strengthen health systems, and protect and include those in situations of vulnerability, including migrants, in order to reduce the risks of future health crises while making societies more resilient and helping to address the drivers of forced migration and displacement. Specific guidance and tools to support such efforts are available and should be used.
- Steps should be taken to implement and strengthen mechanisms to protect the rights of migrants, regardless of their status, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable migrants, and including efforts to ensure non-discriminatory access to social services.
- All should have equal access to services, regardless of their migratory status.

- Crucially, there should be a rights-based approach focusing on migrants' job and livelihood security.
- Policy approaches should reflect the positive contributions of migrants and diaspora, in recognition that due consideration of migration as a cross-cutting issue across all policy areas is needed to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda.
- In the context of widening inequalities, and given that it is at the local level that inclusion and service provision take place and there is greater awareness of opportunities, local and religious leaders, civil society and the private sector should work together at the local level.

## **Pandemic situations require innovative and effective crisis response measures**

- National regularization procedures should be standardized.
- Governments should ratify and apply international human rights instruments, to safeguard the rights of the most vulnerable populations, particularly in migration crises, where migrants are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking and people smuggling.
- Steps should be taken to foster deeper understanding of and insights into realities on the ground, in order to come up with more effective ways of helping migrants and IDPs live a life of dignity.
- Spaces and opportunities should be provided for migrants to develop creative responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, including with a view to longer-term recovery.
- Entrepreneurship, new forms of flexible funding, the engagement of the private sector and the creation of new resources should be encouraged, to support the livelihoods of the most vulnerable.
- As data sharing is vital in crisis situations, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, and central to understanding what is going on in the field, investment in digitalization should be encouraged, with due regard for data privacy and data security.

## **Migrants must be empowered to develop creative responses for the post-COVID-19 recovery and accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

- The voices of migrants, women, young people and marginalized communities must be brought forward in major global and regional forums, and their inclusion in key policy processes and implementation efforts promoted.
- Recognition of the key role played by migrants and members of the diaspora as agents of change must be promoted, notably the way in which they enrich society and contribute to economic development in countries of destination and origin.
- Governments and the private sector should work hand in hand to empower migrant women so as to harness their potential for the development of their communities.
- Capacity-building activities should target young people, including migrant youth, to help them develop adaptable digital skills, with a view to building resilience in labour markets affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Better understanding should be fostered of how to link labour market needs to educational possibilities and how labour and student mobility considerations fit in with this.
- Resilience and adaptability should be built in a world undergoing constant change as a result of digitalization, COVID-19 and climate change, which have steadily affected the way in which people work and move.
- Inclusive lifelong learning approaches and flexible skills-building, recognition of qualifications and re-skilling, for example to help people transition from carbon-based to green jobs, should be made the new norm.
- Efforts to innovate education and vocational training should not overlook the groups most often left behind, from women and girls to youth and the diaspora, as it is important to build a truly inclusive pandemic recovery.



- Student mobility should be rekindled, as it is crucial not only for the students themselves, but also for sustaining educational systems and training the future work force.
- Collaboration should be encouraged between youth and other stakeholders, including the United Nations, government entities and the private sector, so as to identify and advocate ways to foster young people's contributions to the development of youth-friendly policies and programmes, particularly through national projects and programmes, for example as part of United Nations country teams.
- Young people should become active participants in designing programmes, policies and initiatives addressing their situation, thereby also promoting peer-to-peer support networks.
- Opportunities should be made for migrant women to participate in policymaking on issues that affect their lives and educational opportunities for migrant women and girls improved so that they can contribute their skills and efforts to the global economic recovery.

### **A more comprehensive approach is needed to the role of transnational communities and remittances**

- Implementation and application must be ensured of key international instruments, such as the Global Compact for Migration and the International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.
- Recognition should be promoted of the key role that migrants and members of the diaspora play as agents of change, notably the way in which they enrich society and contribute to economic development in their countries of destination and origin.
- Steps should be taken to ensure service continuity and access to remittances for those who rely on them the most, and to support the efforts of Member States and other stakeholders to implement the Global Compact for Migration.

- Migration policy should reflect the positive impact of diasporas.
- Collaborative engagement should be promoted among public authorities and diaspora groups in host and home countries, so as to gather and disseminate the data needed to design programmes that make a difference and encourage diaspora members to support their country of origin.
- Broader diaspora engagement should be fostered in policies and regulatory frameworks.
- The focus should be on strong and sustainable partnerships between all stakeholders, including private players.
- Migrant and diaspora contributions should be supported through financial inclusion, improved financial market infrastructure to help reduce transaction costs, and digitalization.

**Looking ahead to the first International Migration Review Forum, the IDM will play a key role in promoting the use of evidence and best practices in Global Compact implementation**

- Local and national capacity to implement existing policies and tools through global and regional cooperation should be strengthened.
- Cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination on the management of complex migration flows must be strengthened, for example through regional partnerships and initiatives.
- Efforts must be directed towards building local evidence and capacities, to support informed, context-specific and needs-based action.
- Collaboration must be intensified so that all stakeholders speak the same language: scientific evidence from past outbreaks should be made available in a coherent way and used to prepare for future pandemics, as evidence-based policies are essential.

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- Countries that had not participated in the Global Compact negotiations should be asked to attend the International Migration Review Forum and contribute to the activities and debate.
- Governments must come to the first International Migration Review Forum with a renewed and constructive global approach.



# **PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

Second session of the  
International Dialogue on Migration 2021

Leveraging migration for a resilient and  
sustainable post-pandemic recovery:

Opportunities and challenges

14–15 October 2021,  
Geneva International Conference Centre  
and Zoom

Day 1: Global mobility as a driver for equality, inclusive recovery from COVID-19 and accelerated action on the 2030 Agenda	
10:00-10:30	Opening session
	<p><b>Opening Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>António Vitorino</b>, IOM Director General</li> <li>• <b>Anuradha Gupta</b>, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Gavi</li> </ul>
10:00–12:00	<p><b>Panel 1: The impact of COVID-19 on mobility: migration triggers, government response, and the future of border management in the post-pandemic era</b></p>
	<p>This panel will focus on the impact of COVID-19 on cross-border human mobility. For a second year, instability prevails, and the emergence of new COVID-19 variants has led to adapted travel restrictions and continued disruptions to global mobility. The management of borders throughout the pandemic has highlighted some of the existing shortcomings within national immigration systems, including their lack of resilience. States had to develop conditional entry requirements and continuously modify immigration procedures to adapt to shifting health imperatives. Most recently, the use of digital health certificates and their impact for people on the move constitute one of the main challenges to address. Simultaneously, health-related measures under development need comprehensive safeguards and data privacy standards to ensure inclusive access to regular migration pathways while avoiding widening the global mobility divide. The current obstacles surrounding human mobility can be expected to alter migration management in the long-term, serving as a critical turning point in relation to health and global mobility. The panel will also discuss the available data and analysis how the pandemic has reshaped border management and human mobility, how effective are travel measures in curbing the spread of the pandemic and what are some of the observed ramifications for migrants. The panel will seek to show the importance of rethinking approaches to data on human mobility and the necessity for international coordination of travel requirements and measures.</p>

	<p><b>Moderator: Mr António Vitorino</b>, Director General, IOM and Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dr A.K. Abdul Momen</b>, MP, Honourable Foreign Minister, Bangladesh (video message)</li> <li>• <b>Dr Yasmine Fouad</b>, Minister of Environment, Egypt</li> <li>• <b>Ms Anne-Marie Trevelyan</b>, Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth, United Kingdom International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP 26 Presidency (video message)</li> <li>• <b>Mr Frank Tressler Zamorano</b>, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva</li> <li>• <b>Mr Ovais Sarmad</b>, Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)</li> <li>• <b>Mr Andreas Papaconstantinou</b>, Director for Neighbourhood and Middle East, Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), European Commission</li> </ul> <p><b>Moderator: Amy Pope</b>, Deputy Director General for Management and Reform, IOM</p> <p><b>Presenter: Nuno Nunes</b>, Global Displacement Tracking Matrix Coordinator; presentation on rethinking of approaches to data on human mobility and the findings of IOM's and MPI report on impact of COVID-19 on global mobility</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sarah Lou Ysmael Arriola</b>, Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, the Philippines</li> <li>• <b>Henrik Nielsen</b>, Director in charge of International and Horizontal Affairs, DG Home, European Commission</li> <li>• <b>Jessica Bither</b>, Senior Expert Migration, Global Issues, Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Ninglan Wang</b>, Unit head, Points of Entry and Border Health Unit, Country Readiness Strengthening Department, WHO</li> </ul> <p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p>
13:00-15:00	Lunch break

15:00-16:30	<b>Panel 2: Advancing socioeconomic rights and access to services in the COVID-19 era and beyond</b>
	<p>This panel will emphasize inclusion and equity as the key to preparedness and response to COVID-19, and to the way forward. It would therefore focus on advancing migrants' access to health care (according to right to health), in line with universal health coverage principles, and with a view to achieving SDG3. It will highlight the role of diaspora health professionals and migrant workers as important first respondents, and the need to include migrants in the post-COVID and recovery efforts. It will bring perspectives on access to housing, employment support, civic integration/language and digitalization of integration services, including social benefits during COVID and the challenges to ensure efforts to ensure that no one is left behind in the provision. Moreover, ensuring that the rights of people on the move are "portable", or transferable across borders (internal and international), is a critical policy area for recovering better. This panel discussion will also aim at looking into practices for protecting migrant workers across supply chains/ethical recruitment as well as at empowering local and regional governments who are at the forefront of delivering policy and providing access to services. This is particularly the case in urban settings where 90 per cent of all reported COVID-19 cases in urban areas and urban areas are where the majority of migrants and displaced persons settle. This aligns with IOM's commitment to empower local levels of government as part of its institutional strategy on Migration and Sustainable development and links to SDG 11 on sustainable urban development that IOM works to ensure is inclusive as well as with the UN Task Force on the future of cities.</p> <p><b>Moderator: Ugochi Daniels</b>, Deputy Director General for Operations, IOM</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dr. Basem Al-Dahamsheh</b>, Governor, Director of Nationality, Foreign Affairs and Investment, Ministry of Interior, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan</li> <li>• <b>Bola Bardet</b>, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Susu</li> <li>• <b>Jeremy Robbins</b>, Chief Executive Officer, New American Economy</li> <li>• <b>Joint presentation by David Khoudour</b>, Human Mobility Advisor, UNDP and <b>Cécile Riallant</b>, Head, Migration and Sustainable Development, IOM</li> </ul> <p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p>



16:30-18:00	Panel 3: Crisis response in times of COVID-19
	<p>Border closures and/or travel restrictions and lockdowns introduced by many governments since March 2020, in an attempt to contain the spread of the virus, have severely affected movements across borders, migrants themselves, as well as communities in countries of origin. Migrants have largely been overlooked in the preparedness and response planning for COVID-19, in particular in crisis settings where the social systems are fragile or nonexistent. In several countries, migrants have not been able to access basic services that allow them to meet the most pressing needs, further exacerbating their vulnerabilities throughout the pandemic. For countries affected by crisis (such as Afghanistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Lebanon, etc.), the pandemic exacerbated the challenges to delivery of humanitarian assistance and confounded the situation of displaced populations, migrants in vulnerable situations and affected host communities. Moreover, migrants lost their jobs and income, which resulted in an increased of pre-existing basic needs, as well as loss of remittances for their families in the countries of origin. In their attempt to return home, many migrants were stranded in transiting or host countries, increasing the possibility of more limited (or no) access to health care and social support, loss of livelihoods, their uncertain regular status, stigmatization and xenophobia, the risk of detention in already overcrowded detention facilities, heightened risk of mental health challenges, exposure to violence and abuse, including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), trafficking in persons and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). This panel will emphasize crisis response measures and humanitarian inter-agency planning that include lessons learned and preparedness interventions, as well as adjustments to the mode of delivery of humanitarian assistance during the pandemic.</p> <p><b>Moderator: Jeffrey Labovitz</b>, Director, Department of Operations and Emergencies, IOM</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Md. Mohsin, Secretary</b>, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Bangladesh</li> <li>• <b>Ceyda Dumlupinar Guntay</b>, Deputy Programme Coordinator at Turkish Red Crescent, Migration Services Department</li> <li>• <b>Diego Beltrand</b>, IOM DG's Special Envoy to the Regional Response for Venezuela</li> <li>• <b>Christian Mulamba</b>, Country Director, International Medical Corps (IMC), Central African Republic</li> </ul> <p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p>

Day 2: Migrants – Actors of Change for resilient and Sustainable Post Pandemic Recovery	
10:00-11:00	<p><b>Panel 1: The role of migrants in post -COVID-19 recovery and the achievement of SDGs</b></p> <p>COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of well-governed migration for prosperous and healthy societies, while demonstrating the negative impact of reduced human mobility on sustainable development. Extraordinary mobility restrictions enforced around the world to control the transmission of COVID-19 have had immediate and potentially long-term impacts on the attainment of many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our ability to develop responses that mitigate the negative impacts and protect people on the move and their communities, and harness the positive power of migration for recovering better, as called for in the UN Framework for responding to the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19, depends on a good understanding of the effects of the pandemic on human mobility and development. This panel will invite migrant workers, diaspora representatives as well as policymakers to a discussion on the key role of migrants in the recovery from COVID-19 and achievement of the 2030 Agenda. by presenting their direct experience and perspective on how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their work. The panel will aim at looking at how has what we consider essential in an economy changed through the pandemic? How has the role of “essential” migrant workers changed? Which opportunities and challenges are there?</p> <p><b>Moderator: Monica Goracci</b>, Director, Department of Migration Management, IOM</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Amina Hersi Moghe</b>, Founder of the Atiak Sugar Project, Uganda</li> <li>• <b>Caroline Caporossi</b>, Founder, Association for the Integration of Women and Youth Forum</li> <li>• <b>Peter Kwok</b>, Chairman and Founder of the UK Federation of Chinese Professionals</li> </ul> <p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p>
11:00-12:00	<p><b>Panel 2: Addressing the challenges faced by migrant youth during the pandemic and empower youth to facilitate sustainable recovery</b></p> <p>This panel discussion will align with the <b>Our Common Agenda</b> launched by the United Nations Secretary General in September and it will focus on three key aspects of ongoing youth-work, including COVID-19 recovery, upskilling/reskilling to meet the needs of post-pandemic economic development green and digital economy, and improving educational outcomes. The education sector</p>

exemplifies why we must recover better, and swiftly, from the pandemic: to minimize inequalities, to empower migrants and to keep educational systems running effectively. To do this, and in line with Global Compact for Migration Objective 15 on basic services and 18 on skills development, as well as SDG 4 on education, we must build on technological advances, foster virtual student mobility to counter physical restrictions for continued global advancement of research and knowledge sharing, invest in skilling and re-skilling migrants and returnees to increase their access to decent work, in accordance with SDG Targets 4.3 and 4.4, advocate for flexible school environments adapted to the needs of vulnerable migrants, in accordance with SDG Target 4.5. Another important aspect that this panel will consider is student mobility and youth in relation to COVID-19. There are several factors for this: COVID-19 mobility restrictions have led to massive losses of student mobility; COVID-19's impacts on education compound migrants' vulnerabilities and exacerbate inequalities (as demonstrated in the previous panel), and migrants and people on the move still remain excluded from the human rights to education. Migration can be an education win-win-win for migrants, communities of origin and destination, however digitalization poses a unique opportunity for migrant-inclusive education, but there are key risks. The COVID pandemic gave a boost to automation in certain sectors while at the same time created new jobs in other sectors requiring new skill sets. This requires a rethinking of re- and upskilling of migrants and targeted employment support for migrant youth. Linking employment to education, skilling and reskilling migrants can foster access to decent work. This panel will provide an opportunity to present relevant perspectives and best practices on these issues.

**Moderator: Wen Li**, Director, Department of International Cooperation and Partnerships, IOM

**Speakers:**

- **Rasika Jayasuriya**, Policy and Program Specialist, Global Migration and Displacement, UNICEF
- **Sagyntai uulu Arstanbek**, Coordinator of the Project "Training Centers at Mountain Pastures", Kyrgyzstan
- **Minh Nguyen**, Asia-Pacific Regional Lead for the Migration Youth and Children Platform, United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth

**Q&A**

<b>12:00-13:00</b>	<b>Panel 3: Harnessing the potential of migrant women for a sustainable socioeconomic recovery</b>
	<p>This panel will look into the role of migrant women as major promoters and contributors towards socioeconomic development and will try to address some of the barriers to achieving their role. Women are undervalued but crucial development actors through their domestic work: 8.4 million (73.4%) of migrant domestic workers are women or adolescent girls. Women sent about half of global remittances in 2016, even though they tend to earn less than men. Migrant women are more likely to be in the labour force (64%) than non-migrant women. The pandemic particularly impacted migrant women, some 3/4 of whom work in informal sectors vulnerable to the pandemic's socioeconomic impact without strong legal protections. We need to address the barriers they face to enhance their own development and contributions to development (less access to social protection, sexual and gender based violence, work exploitation and the double burden of being in informal work and bearing the brunt of care/parental duties). This panel will invite relevant representatives to exchange perspectives and best practices for empowering migrant women in advancing sustainable development and COVID-19 recovery.</p> <p><b>Moderator: Laurent de Boeck</b>, Chief of IOM Mission Egypt</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Diana Echeverria</b>, Director of Human Mobility and Attention to Migrants, El Salvador</li> <li>• <b>Fridah Ntarangwi</b>, Founder &amp; Managing Director of Zidicircle</li> <li>• <b>Dina Nuryati</b>, Coordinator for Research and International Relations, Indonesian, Migrant Workers Union (SBMI)</li> </ul> <p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p>
<b>13:00-15:00</b>	Lunch break
<b>15:00-16:30</b>	<b>Panel 4: Empowering migrants and transnational communities as development actors: financial inclusion, remittances and beyond</b>
	<p>As during other challenging times and crises, the COVID-19 pandemic has once again demonstrated the ability of transnational communities to quickly adjust to the situation and mobilize their support and resources to assist those most vulnerable or left behind. Indeed, despite wide-spread anticipations of a radical drop of remittances in 2020 due to the economic crises linked to the</p>

pandemic – predicted to 20 percent by the World Bank in April 2020, migrant remittances once again demonstrated their resilience and continued providing an important buffer against falling into extreme poverty, loss of livelihoods and inability to afford treatment against the disease and save lives. The importance to keep remittance flowing became high on the agendas of governments and partners, such as within the [Swiss-UK Call to Action](#) launched in May 2020 and the multistakeholder initiative the Remittance Community Task Force that developed a [blueprint for action](#). IOM has been an active participant in all these initiatives, as it recognizes the importance of working further on addressing pertaining challenges related to migrant remittances, given their critical role in securing livelihoods and well-being in so many households and communities – as stressed in Objective 20 of the Global Compact for Migration. At the same time, IOM continued working with partners on advocating for a more comprehensive approach towards migrant contributions to development which goes far beyond remittances and encompasses also such areas as diaspora investment and philanthropy, tourism and transnational networks, migrant entrepreneurship and trade – all these aspects mentioned in the Global Compact for Migration Objective 19. Despite the increasing focus of policymakers to the topic of migrant remittances and broader contributions reinforced by COVID-19 pandemic, governments across the world have not been very active when reporting on the progress in achieving objectives 19 and 20 in their voluntary reviews. This panel will convene global leaders and experts on migrants contributions to development, in particular remittance transfers and other forms of contributions to once again draw the attention to the importance of supporting migrants and diaspora communities in their contributions through assistance with financial inclusion, enhancement of financial market infrastructure to help reduce transaction costs and digitalization, improving ways to capture data on migrants contributions to help define policy responses, as well as create broader enabling diaspora engagement policy and regulative frameworks. By taking stock from the lessons learnt in terms of engaging with transnational communities during COVID-19, the panel will also review the progress made since the last IOM convened Diaspora Ministerial from 2013 as well as pave some way for coordination and initiatives looking ahead to 2022 and the forthcoming International Migration Forum Review. Moving forward, it becomes crucial to offer a forward looking and practice oriented discussion of the topic of migrant remittances, financial inclusion and broader diaspora engagement and discuss how this important part of the migration and development agenda, specifically Global Compact for Migration Objective 19 and 20, could be best reflected in 2022 and beyond.

	<p><b>Moderator: Marina Manke</b>, Head, Labour Mobility and Human Development, IOM</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <p><i>Remittances and financial inclusion of migrants and diaspora communities – lessons learnt during COVID-19 response</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Veronica Studsgaard</b>, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, IAMTN</li> </ul> <p><i>Contributions and Counting – migrants' support to countries of origin and destination beyond remittances.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Leon Isaacs</b>, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, DMA Global</li> </ul> <p><i>Diasporas as partners during response to pandemic and beyond – what can governments do?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gerardo Pérez</b>, Director of Diaspora and Development, El Salvador</li> <li>• <b>Abdifatah Diriye Ahmed</b>, Director of the Somali National Institute of Health</li> </ul> <p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p>
<b>16:30-17:30</b>	<b>Panel 5: The road to IMRF – looking forward to the next IDM</b>
	<p>The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration has integrated a quadrennial global review to advance its implementation. The first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) is to take place in the first half of 2022 as set in the modalities resolution (RES/73/326). Many countries have advanced in integrating the Global Compact for Migration into their national planning despite the significant challenges and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as discussed in the last IDM session; many stakeholders have been actively involved at the national, regional and global level; and the reviews of the Global Compact at the regional level have taken place. As we approach the IMRF, member states as well as a wide range of stakeholders are starting to prepare their inputs, and the UN Network on Migration, with IOM as the Coordinator and Secretariat, supporting the preparations. The following months will be critical for a successful outcome of the IMRF. With the Member States having requested for the IDM to contribute to the IMRF, this panel will look at how the next IDM session that will take place in February 2022 could do so.</p> <p><b>Framing questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are IOM member states experiences with reporting on the Global Compact for Migration implementation?</li> <li>• What are recommendations from member states looking ahead (e.g. how to track progress, address challenges, how to link with existing frameworks such as the Agenda 2030?)</li> <li>• How can IOM support member states, e.g. in developing national implementation plans, to prepare for the IMRF through consultations, national reports, and various regional and cross-regional cooperation processes?</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Moderator: António Vitorino</b>, Director General, IOM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sanjay Bhattacharya</b>, Vice Minister, Consular, Passport, Visas and Overseas Indian Affairs, India</li> <li>• <b>José Luis Pardo Cuervo</b>, Ambassador, Special Envoy for Migration Affairs, Spain</li> <li>• <b>Christine O'Dwyer</b>, Deputy Head of Division, GLOBAL. GI.4 Migration and Human Security, European External Action Service</li> </ul> <p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p>
17:30-18:00	Closing session









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**International Organization for Migration**  
**Migration Research and Publications Division**  
17 route des Morillons, P.O. Box 17, 1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland  
Tel.: +41.22.717 91 11; Fax: +41.22.798 61 50  
Email: [publications@iom.int](mailto:publications@iom.int); Website: [publications.iom.int](http://publications.iom.int)

