

MOST/REPORTS/2017/1  
Original: English  
26 January 2017

## **MIGRATION AS A DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE**

### **ANALYSIS OF ROOT CAUSES AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

**January 2017**

*This document was prepared by the secretariat of UNESCO's intergovernmental science programme on the Management of Social Transformations (MOST), in consultation with selected experts, on the basis of a high-level meeting convened by the Slovak Presidency of the EU Council in Brussels on 29 November 2016. Its purpose is analytical: except where explicitly stated otherwise, it does not state an official UNESCO position on the topics addressed.*

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## 1 Overall Purpose

The purpose of the present document is to consider the nexus between migration and development from the perspective of research in the social and human sciences and to contribute and enhance the knowledge base available for policy design and implementation at the European Union (EU) level.

By focusing on the root causes of migration, the document is designed to complement other initiatives and analyses conducted by EU and United Nations (UN) institutions to address management of large-scale movements of persons, particularly in emergency situations, and the social consequences of migration in receiving countries.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the work of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission is exemplary in supporting EU policies with independent evidence throughout the whole policy cycle; while the International Organisation for Migration has been a leader in implementing programmes in the form of research and capacity-building for governments and communities, mostly in countries that have undergone conflict; as well as in building partnerships with relevant institutions, authorities and business.

## 2 Migration – a Development Policy Challenge

### 2.1 Migration and development: a complex relationship

Migration is recognised to be a powerful tool for development when managed by “*humane, fair and well-governed migration policies*”, as stressed by the UN Global Migration Group (GMG).<sup>2</sup> “*In large part, it is the social, cultural, economic and political context in which the movement of people takes place which largely determines whether migration translates into increased opportunities and well-being or deprivation and vulnerability*”. In this perspective, this paper will explore the various ways in which it is the *nature* of migration rather than its scale that determines both its acceptability and its contribution to development. The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA, 2012) acknowledges the less than clear relationship between migration and development, and emphasises a general consensus that international migration can adversely affect the development of countries of origin through loss of essential human resources, often referred to as “brain drain”, as well as through potential depletion of the national labour force due to movements at all skill levels. Most significantly, international migration could hold important benefits for home country development. It holds very significant potential for the development of livelihood strategies for under-resourced communities and can directly contribute through remittances to poverty reduction at the individual level.

Conversely, development policies have implications for migration decisions and patterns at the individual or family level: “*What is clear is that policies shape migration flows and decisions, having an impact on different types of migrant in different ways. Importantly, non-migration policies, such as labour, health and benefits systems, also shape migration dynamics, and may in many cases be more influential than targeted legislation.*” (Kobzar, 2015: 18) Disaster risk reduction strategies, the mobilisation of diasporas and the leverage of social remittances through policies oriented towards information and communication

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<sup>1</sup> In particular, this initiative builds on previous European Commission documents in which the EU has started to frame a debate about the positive relationship between migration and development.

<sup>2</sup> Background note for the GMG communiqué, “Call to strengthen the inclusion of migrants and migration in the post-2015 United Nations development agenda” available at <http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org/>.

technologies (ICTs) are other examples of development policies that contribute to changing the nature of migration flows, as discussed later in this paper.

As noted by Papademetriou and Martin (1993) when referring to the “unsettled nature” of the relationship, discussions on the implications of migration for development, and vice versa, are still very much open. Martin and Taylor (1996) drew attention to the non-linearity of the relationship between migration and development in the form of the migration “hump”, according to which development leads to increased emigration in the short to medium term. Skeldon (1997) showed that more developed societies tend to be more not less mobile, challenging the assumption often implicit in public debate that development might in a rather mechanical way reduce emigration. More generally, De Haas (2010) showed that the relationship between migration and development is “embedded” in social, economic and political contexts and that we cannot *a priori* assume the effects to be either negative or positive. A recent review commissioned by the European Commission highlights that “*even more than in the past, the development of a long-term vision for European migration and mobility policies needs to be underpinned by sound evidence and analysis, reliable and comparable data*” (King and Lulle, 2016).

Given its importance for the whole range of development issues, migration has for some time been on the development agendas of international and national agencies. For example, following the inclusion of a migration clause (article 13) in the political dimensions chapter of the Cotonou Agreement (2000),<sup>3</sup> migration has spanned the domestic and foreign policy agendas of the EU, but has been pushed onto the latter by domestic pressures. This is partly a product of the “comprehensive approach” to migration envisaged in the Amsterdam Treaty. The “comprehensive approach” aims at tackling the “root causes” of migration using development and other external relations instruments (Higazi, 2005: vii). Indeed, in the early years of the discussions on the migration and development nexus, the general objective was to maximize development benefits and minimize the negative impacts of migration with a view to building on the potentially beneficial effects of international migration in fostering development in poorer countries of origin (Skeldon, 2008). In more practical terms, such approaches led most of the designed and implemented policies to be framed in terms of reducing the total number of migrants and tackling “root causes” merely as an issue of border management.

However, the academic community as well as civil society have pointed critically at two major flaws: the overemphasis on one category of migrants (viz. international migrants) and a predominantly economic approach, failing to consider “perspectives from the South” (Castles and Wise, 2008). In particular, as observed by King and Lulle (2016), migration and development policy discourses “*were criticized for their persisting reliance on a ‘root causes approach’ through which migration was reduced to a consequence of poverty and under-development, in contradiction with research findings suggesting that successful development processes in poorer countries initially tend to increase rather than decrease migration.*”

In response to these criticisms, the debate has grown in prominence over time in international arenas such the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD) and the UN High-Level Dialogues on Migration (UNHLDs), as well as in EU policy strategies. In particular, the second UNHLD 2014 GFMD summit underlined the need to integrate human mobility in the post-2015 development agenda. Alongside this, the whole process to elaborate the Sustainable Development Goals has oriented the global discussions on migration and development towards a rights-based approach responsive to the interlinkages between migration and the three pillars of sustainable development. In particular, the New

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<sup>3</sup> 2000/483/EC.

York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants,<sup>4</sup> adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2016, stresses that root causes should be addressed *“through the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflict, greater coordination of humanitarian, development and peace-building efforts, the promotion of the rule of law at the national and international levels and the protection of human rights”*. The international community has thus recognized *“a shared responsibility to manage large movements of refugees and migrants in a humane, sensitive, compassionate and people-centred manner”* (paragraph 11).

## **2.2 Development cooperation towards sustainable migration management**

These developments emphasize that migration cannot be managed only at the EU’s borders (Higazi, 2005:2) and that addressing the “root causes” of migration through development cooperation in sending and transit countries will not necessarily lead to a reduction of the absolute number of migrants. Furthermore, this entails that the causes of poverty, instability, marginalisation and exclusion and the lack of development and economic opportunities, with particular reference to the most vulnerable populations, should all be addressed in both origin and destination countries.

Furthermore, this implies that, even with respect to large-scale movements in emergency situations, a purely humanitarian approach to migration is insufficient. It is indeed very explicitly recognized that migration constitutes a development policy challenge. As stated in paragraph 43 of the New York Declaration, the international community has committed to *“cooperate to create conditions that allow communities and individuals to live in peace and prosperity in their homelands. Migration should be a choice, not a necessity. We will take measures, inter alia, to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, whose objectives include eradicating extreme poverty and inequality, revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies based on international human rights and the rule of law, creating conditions for balanced, sustainable and inclusive economic growth and employment, combating environmental degradation and ensuring effective responses to natural disasters and the adverse impacts of climate change.”*

What is true of large movements of people reflecting and giving rise to humanitarian emergencies is even truer if one adopts a broader perspective on the root causes of migration in its very diverse forms and patterns. It is well known that most migrants are not refugees who migrate as a direct response to acute or imminent personal danger (physical or otherwise). The majority of migrants do not cross state borders, remain within the global South, and move looking for increased social and economic opportunities. Framing migration as a development policy challenge thus means focusing not just on environmental change, global inequalities, and sustainable development, but also on routine, non-emergency migration, especially within areas of free or semi-free movement. South-South, internal and non-emergency movements tend to be neglected in media coverage and, even, policy discourse.

Such a comprehensive and differentiated approach expresses the commitments stated in the New York Declaration and complements them by taking into account all aspects of migration from a long-term development perspective, with a view to understanding and addressing the factors that create and sustain migration and displacement. Joint efforts also allow capitalizing on the opportunities offered by the global 2030 policy agenda to recognize migration and mobility as levers to address multiple global challenges,

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<sup>4</sup> UN Document A/71/L.1.

including humanitarian action, sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk reduction (IDMC & Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015).

The point is not to present universal free movement of persons as a necessarily desirable real-world option – though it is striking that most regional integration bodies (e.g. ASEAN, ECOWAS) are concerned to promote it to some extent within specific geographical and institutional settings. Rather it represents a horizon of successful achievement of the 2030 Agenda that is useful at least heuristically. Development cooperation should ideally not aim at containing or restricting migration but, rather, on alleviating humanitarian pressures, which in turn shifts the policy burden to administrative-legal management of regular, legal migration. Developing people's resources means that migration will be more about choices and less about pressures. A world in which routine, individualized free movement would be a viable policy option is, effectively, a world in which both inclusion and sustainability would have been universally achieved. And beyond this, the 2030 development agenda is also a way to trigger the benefits of circular mobility and transnationality for development in countries of origin, transit and destination.

### **3 Understanding Migration and its Root Causes**

#### **3.1 The age of migration: new geographies and new temporalities**

As understandings of the linkages between migration and development have evolved in academic and policy-making communities, so have knowledge about and political framing of migration patterns and migration routes (Wihtol de Wenden, 2016b).

The “age of migration” (Castles and Miller, 1993) is marked by extraordinarily diversified, globalized and accelerated migratory processes (Castles *et al.*, 2014). The total number of migrants has been estimated as 77 million in 1975, 120 in 1999, 150 million in the early 2000s and 244 million today (Gemenne, 2015). The IOM report on the migration and development nexus underlines that *“the significance of changes during the post-colonial era lies not in the fact of global migration – which has existed for centuries – but rather in the great increase in the magnitude, density, velocity, and diversity of global connections, in the growing awareness of these global relationships, and in the growing recognition of the possibilities for activities that transcend state boundaries”* (IOM, 2002). The need to take account of the aforementioned factors also bears on the complexity inherent in the migration-development nexus.

At the same time, human mobility has become more politicized, and states' acknowledgment of the phenomenon of international migration, now extended to new types of mobility, has grown considerably. However, the perception that migration is a “problem” to which policies need to provide “solutions” is so deeply entrenched in the prevailing policy language that it is easy to miss the extent to which it is demonstrably inaccurate. It is thus important for analytical purposes to recognize that the term “migration”, as a form of mobility, serves as much to obscure the differences between disparate patterns of human movement as it does to highlight their broad family resemblance.

Empirically, migration patterns include internal migration (mostly from rural areas to cities, induced by socio-economic or environmental-related pressures) as well as external and cross-border migration, which includes refugee movements towards frontier states but also takes numerous other forms. Another way in which research results tend to counter assumptions common in public debate, driven by the politicization of migration discourse, is evidence that most migrants are not in fact moving from the

“global South” to the “global North”. IOM’s 2013 World Migration Report (IOM, 2013) distinguishes between four global migration pathways: South-North, South-South, North-North and North-South. South-North migration is usually highlighted, sometimes exclusively, driven by the politicization of migration discourse. However, while South-North is the migration pathway that shows the fastest increase in use, and while the EU is still the single most sought-after destination in the world, such flows contribute to less than half of global migration (around 40 per cent). Meanwhile, a similar number of people have migrated within the global South – 37 per cent. Intra-North migration accounts for 19 per cent, and North-South for 4 per cent of the total. To these figures must be added 740 million internal migrants.

Furthermore, while internal and international migration affects nearly all regions of a world in which migration is truly globalized, a closer look shows that migration flows are in fact organized around complex regional systems and involve processes based on the complementarity of countries of origin and destination, related to geographical, historical, cultural proximity and networks of people (de Wenden, 2016a).

Conversely, migration may be taken as an index of the structural imbalances that make the 2030 Agenda both necessary and challenging in the first place. The multiple “drivers” of migration, such as causal factors, events, motivations, structural conditions, “push” and “pull” factors, are of great policy relevance but they do not exhaust the analytical issues and may even distort the overall understanding of migration as a development challenge.

Contemporary societies – like their historical predecessors – offer multiple examples of migration functioning systemically as the outcome of routine individual choices and being recognized to be legitimate in this regard. Much internal migration within established nation-states has this character, as does migration within regulated zones of free movement, of which the EU is exemplary. At the global level, elite migration generally has the same features, although political opposition to the supposedly excessive presence of foreign investors may occasionally be significant.

While media and political attention tends to focus – understandably – on interregional migration in emergency situations, it is thus important to recognize that such migration flows are not the only ones, and indeed are in many respects untypical. A differentiated understanding of migration dynamics, informed by research, is one necessary contribution to policy development. It follows that, in addition to consideration of well-recognized “drivers” such as environmental change, conflict and global inequalities, attention should be given to routine non-emergency migration, especially within areas of free or semi-free movement, which responds to different dynamics and tends to be neglected in policy discourse because it is seen as “not a problem”.

In this context, consistently with the general mandate of the MOST programme to strengthen the nexus between research and policy, there is a need to support policy stakeholders in considering how improved understanding of the very diverse forms and patterns of migration can inform more appropriate policies.

### **3.2 Migration: a diversity of patterns, decisions and policies**

Migration, as defined by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), is a “*movement of people, either within a country or across international borders. It includes all kinds of movements, irrespective of the drivers, duration and voluntary/involuntary nature. It encompasses economic migrants, distress migrants, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees and asylum seekers, returnees and people moving for other*”

*purposes, including for education and family reunification*" (FAO, 2016b). Such a definition underlines, as discussed in the previous section, the number and diversity of human mobility patterns that can in principle be covered by the term "migration".

Facing this diversity of migration patterns and the different policies they call for, a preference for the language of "mobility" rather than "migration" may be observed in some specialized knowledge communities. For instance, the mobility perspective is in evidence among specialized researchers in Africa, and structured in particular the input commissioned by UNESCO for the MOST Forum of Ministers on migration and insecurity in Central Africa held in Yaoundé in October 2016 (Fall, 2016). "Mobility" is a less common term than "migration" in political discourse and, in so far as it is present, tends to have positive connotations, e.g. in connection with "social mobility". While there are historically well attested constructions of mobility as in itself suspicious, it would be hard to argue that mobility in general is inherently negative. The language of mobility thus offers an apparently positive framework within which migration can be reconsidered. However, it should not be assumed that the promotion of such language, precisely because it is to a significant extent politically oriented, raises no analytical issues. Strictly speaking, international migration is clearly a form of mobility, as a more general term referring to all aspects of human movement, but renouncing the term migration to cover what is distinctively international about mobility risks loss of clarity. It may be more productive to recognize that international migration comes in highly diverse forms, that one form can turn into another (e.g. student to economic to family) and that, fundamentally, the "meaning" of migration is linked to decisions as well as broader social perceptions, especially in destination countries, about the value, utility or worth of migrants.

In particular, it is clear that migrants are often motivated by economic opportunities to find a better quality of life, to improve employment opportunities or to support families back home. Other powerful incentives include personal safety and security as well as opportunities to gain empowerment or education that may be unavailable in home communities owing to factors such as discrimination and lack of infrastructure (Kobzar, 2015). Conversely, poverty, food insecurity<sup>5</sup> and a lack of access to markets are underlined by the FAO as among the major "push" factors of migration and displacement, in particular in rural areas (FAO, 2016b).<sup>6</sup> Moreover, political factors, including state fragility, poor urban or agricultural planning, the absence of investment in transport, agricultural and energy infrastructure or even corruption,<sup>7</sup> are also well-acknowledged "drivers", creating the background conditions against which decisions to migrate are more likely to be made. Research by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) has shown that the majority of displacement crises, particularly protracted ones, are the result of political blockages that prevent adequate protection and assistance reaching internally displaced persons and limit prospects for the resolution of displacement crises.

Furthermore, while the term "drivers" is convenient shorthand, it can give the misleading impression that the different forms and patterns of migration respond in mechanical ways to underlying causes. Clearly, this is not at all the case. Migration is also mediated through the legal and administrative processes that apply to its various manifestations, as well as the political and cultural dynamics that shape how abstract

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<sup>5</sup> A 2015 study by the World Food Programme (WFP) and IOM in Latin America revealed a positive correlation between food insecurity and migration. Indeed, assessments conducted in drought-affected areas in 2014 highlighted that migration was a widely implemented coping strategy for dealing with deteriorating food security, adopted by 5 to 12 percent of all households interviewed (WFP & IOM, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> More than 75 percent of the world's poor reside in rural areas and depend on agricultural production for subsistence.

<sup>7</sup> There is evidence that unemployment and underemployment in rural areas are among the principal drivers of migration of youth (UNICEF, 2014).

regulatory frameworks are actually applied. To this extent, migration regimes<sup>8</sup> are directly relevant to analysis of patterns of mobility. However, their impacts are controversial. Migration regimes relate to mental maps that reflect the perceived desirability of various destinations and the nature of the barriers to mobility that they throw up. It is a familiar finding from the literature that such mental maps, as constructed through family networks, and increasingly through the dynamics of social media, may connect poorly to the real opportunities and risks faced by prospective migrants. Migration regimes are thus always to some extent imagined and not simply legal-administrative constructs.

Carling (2002) uses the phrase “migration aspirations” as dynamic and malleable processes, referring to factors such as happiness, sense of security, wealth, as well as what is desirable or preferable, taking account of intangibles such as enthusiasm or resignation, which have very real consequences. The desire or aspiration to migrate intersects with the perceived ability of actual migration, which depends on individual dimensions (personality, resources, skills), context (e.g. family networks) but also macro-dynamics (e.g. socio-economic opportunities, and migration regimes). In this regard, as underlined by several experts, focusing on “migration aspirations” allows a better understanding of how development can, depending on the situation, shape migration incentives (Clemens, 2014; Czaika & Vothknecht, 2014; De Haas, 2007).

With these caveats on the whole language of “drivers”, the concern to take adequate account of individual perceptions, motivations and logics of action points to a useful distinction between “triggers” and “drivers” of migration that has been developed by the IDMC and Norwegian Refugee Council.

“Triggers” are sudden-onset pressures which unfold over very short time-scales and which decisions whether to migrate are usually derived from. Synonyms that are used are “cause”, “hazard”, “shock” or “tipping point”. Armed attacks, natural hazards such as earthquakes or floods, as well as forced eviction, are potential triggers for migration and displacement. Triggers may or may not lead to displacement or migration as people confront the level of threat to both their immediate physical and economic security and their capacity to flee their homes. The visibility of such events makes them very prone to political and public attention; tipping points call for organized emergency and humanitarian responses.

However, while these events may or may not directly trigger displacement or migration, they are the result of complex interactions of multiple underlying drivers. Indeed, no sudden-onset pressure of migration and displacement takes place in a “political vacuum”. Drivers refer to slow-onset pressures for which the tipping point that leads to the actual decision to migration is not clear. Drivers are by their nature the less visible underlying factors that predate and feed into immediate and more visible events. Over time, they link, overlap and accumulate to a point where human rights abuses occur or a crisis erupts. Drivers exacerbate existing risks and vulnerabilities. The example of the depletion of natural resources due to environmental degradation and climate change is compelling: *“Natural hazards that trigger displacement and lead to crises are often heavily influenced by human actions including deforestation, dam-building and release of flood waters, indicating drivers that are less than ‘natural’”* (IDMC & Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015). Such poor management of natural resources undermines the

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<sup>8</sup> Migration regimes are the (highly differentiated) legal, administrative, political and technological frameworks, including but not limited to migration policies, through which people move or are prevented from moving. They are the subject of extensive literature, covering their description (notably from the perspective of legal studies), their critical analysis (including socio-anthropological analysis of the ways in which the behaviour of migrants responds to the regimes to which they relate) and their normative assessment.

resilience of communities and increases their exposure and vulnerability in the face of natural hazards (FAO, 2016b).

The distinction between triggers and drivers is helpful in offering an analytical structure that avoids the risk of segmenting migration processes between supposedly autonomous processes based on different kinds of vulnerability – as if the best approach to, say, poverty, climate change and civil war was to establish separate policy frameworks for each (IOM, 2002).

On the other hand, it remains true that different categories have different needs and thus fall under different protection frameworks – and in some cases may not best be considered in terms of protection at all. Populations on the move include such diverse categories as labour migrants (regular and irregular), smuggled migrants, trafficked persons, unaccompanied and separated children, environmental migrants, as well as refugees, asylum-seekers, and individuals seeking family reunification. It is clear that reducing migration to asylum, as sometimes occurs in public debate, actually undermines the legal principle of asylum by eliminating what is specific about the situation and position of refugees. Similarly, family reunification needs to be addressed through a human rights lens, precisely because it is politically controversial. At the same time, however, these categories are not separate. People’s reasons for moving are mixed and they may fall into one or more categories which also may change along their migration route and over time. Migration policies thus need to take account of these complexities, recognizing in particular that “root causes” do not operate separately from other migration dynamics.

Such distinctions are a key feature of a positive approach to migration, which needs to move beyond the false idea that migration constitutes one single “problem” in order to understand the different issues arising from migration flows – some of which may indeed be problems. Unpacking “migration” into its different aspects and designing differentiated policies to address them is in itself a positive analytical strategy. Its direct policy implications are discussed in section 4.

Furthermore, focusing research and policy concerns only on migration flows or on people who actually migrate may lead to neglect of involuntary immobility,<sup>9</sup> which is no less significant than forced mobility. Both migrating and staying where one is involve choices and constraints. The phrase “trapped populations” refers to individuals or families that are too poor to leave their home or to relocate in areas where they are no longer exposed to risks (Government Office for Science, 2011). Individual or household factors contributing to the inability to move include financial means as well as social, cultural and particularly environmental factors. Structural and systemic factors are also important. As Carling (2002) has emphasized, lack of development is one key factor causing immobility. Migration regimes may also contribute to involuntary immobility, as may the social circumstances prevalent in destination countries.

As argued by Kobzar (2015), the interaction of forced migration with forced immobility is well explained in the case of climate change. While there has been much speculation that climate change will lead to detrimental environmental conditions, forcing mass movements from affected areas, scholars point to a lack of evidence for prediction of future trends (Pigue, 2010; Pigue, 2012). Where climate change does have its greatest impact, it is likely that large portions of the population will be forced to remain, owing to their lack of resources for relocation. For this reason, it can be argued – contrary to the prevailing policy common sense – that climate-induced stresses are more likely to shape internal mobility than to result in large-scale international migration (de Haas, 2011b).

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<sup>9</sup> Defined by the contradictory combination of the aspiration to migrate with the inability to do so (Carling, 2002).

In light of the above considerations, decisions to move may be analysed in terms of three major dimensions: first, the timeframe (slow-onset or sudden pressures), secondly, the level of structural constraints which refers to the structural context-specific circumstances within which decisions are made (such features include migration regimes, the economic cost of migration, the existence of social networks and reachable diasporas and ICT) ; and thirdly, the level of preparation that allows distinguishing between proactive and reactive mobility (or immobility) decisions.<sup>10</sup>

In particular, a decision to migrate within a context of slow and long-term pressures and low structural constraints will mainly depend on multiple socio-economic and cultural factors at the micro level (these include age, sex, education, values and aspirations), leading either to individual/family decisions or to forced migration. By contrast, decisions to migrate within a highly constrained environment pose the question of the tipping point beyond which immobility is no longer preferable. In the very different situation where pressures to move are high and sudden (typically, in emergencies), decisions tend to be *reactive*. The ability to move depends on the available economic and social resources, leading either to trapped populations or to sudden mass migration – both constituting humanitarian crises, but with quite different policy implications.

### **3.3 Research gaps on the migration and development nexus**

Based on the above analytical framework, some major knowledge gaps in the migration-development field can be identified. Their combination sketches a research agenda that can provide a focus for future work.

Beyond the identification of migration drivers (slow onset pressures) and triggers (sudden events), a knowledge gap remains with regard to the distance, direction and duration of migration, which tends to be overlooked by the driver/trigger lens. This gap is particularly acute and problematic for the analysis of the complex relationship between environmental pressures, conflict and migration. While there is extensive academic research on drivers and triggers, tipping points with respect to slow-onset phenomena remain under-researched despite their great policy relevance.

Furthermore, research underlines the fact that claims about the impact of climate change on conflict are insufficiently supported by scientific evidence (Gemenne, 2015). While the many ways in which climate change is affecting the security of populations are acknowledged, for instance in the IPCC 5<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report, most of the literature on the climate-conflict nexus has been published in the form of policy briefs or reports by NGOs, think tanks and government agencies. It has served to convince national security communities that climate change will lead to conflict, but has failed to provide detailed explanations of the connection. These neglected issues should form the basis of a new research agenda. In particular, as advocated by Gemenne (2015), researchers working on the climate-conflict nexus should further explore not only what causes competition and conflict but also what leads to peace and cooperation. Such knowledge will make it possible to design policies that foster and support cooperation, rather than minimizing risks through security responses.

Researchers have called for a migrant-oriented understanding of migration patterns and decisions, based on socio-anthropological analysis of motivations, constraints, and aspirations. Migration aspirations for example, are often overlooked as drivers of migration, leading to neglect of involuntary immobility. Taking account of involuntary immobility underlines the need to build into the research-policy agenda the

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<sup>10</sup> For further details on the factors of migration, see UK Government Office for Science (2011).

generally positive perspective on migration already enshrined in the high-level statements of the international community. It can indeed be argued that migration, in some but clearly not all cases, has intrinsic value. On the other hand, much migration is instrumental in the sense that geographical mobility is incidental to some other purpose. This raises three questions calling for enhanced research: what is the end to which migration is a means? What would be alternative means? How are choices made between different means? Such disaggregated analysis does not aim at presenting people's behaviour as simple. Rather, it relies on the idea that, answers to these questions, based on ethnographic research (Piot, 2010) could provide knowledge that is critical for policy-making.

Similarly, migration and displacement may be approached from the viewpoint of socio-ecosystem resilience: *"as an adaptation strategy, migration helps to diversify livelihoods. Thus, researching on the economic and environmental aspects of human settlements in the context of climate and environmental change can help identify anticipatory measures to adjust to potential environmental stresses"* (Kelpsaite and Mach, 2015). Combining this comprehensive contextual analysis with robust data should allow practitioners to identify what erodes peoples' capacity to cope as well as ways to intervene to reduce displacement risk. The displaced themselves have an important role to play in ensuring the veracity, reliance and legitimacy of this data. They can point to drivers beyond the precipitating trigger when explaining why they fled.

Particular attention should also be given to data-related challenges in the improvement of the research-policy nexus. Academic experts are calling for an enhanced evidence base on migration in certain areas of the world. In particular, the lack, to varying degrees, of up-to-date and relevant data in Africa, Asia or Latin America is judged to lead to poor management and policy-making. Furthermore, migration data collection may be a significant lever for capacity-building. There is a particularly urgent need for data in areas where basic statistical information is lacking – as emphasized in the case of Central Africa by the outcome declaration of the MOST Ministerial Forum that took place in Yaoundé in October 2016 – but it is equally important to enhance the qualitative information produced by the social and human sciences. In this context, further data collection initiatives should involve a mixed method approach based on quantitative and qualitative analysis; they should be multi-site and incorporate longitudinal studies (from sending to receiving countries) to give an account of the broad picture. Moreover, data collection programs are encouraged to move away from statistics that are solely driven by administrative categories (such as visas, naturalizations, arrests and deportations). While extremely relevant to the understanding of migration regimes and their implications, such data are collected for purposes that appear heterogeneous at a large scale and not aligned with the needs of the social and human sciences.

In particular, one initiative in this regard, which could be replicated more widely, stems from the MOST Ministerial Forum (Yaoundé, October 2016), which announced the launch in January 2017 of a policy-oriented research project on "Conceptualizing and measuring migration policy change in Central Africa". The focus on Central Africa is designed to fill research gaps and strengthen the evidence base for migratory policy-making in the subregion through cooperative action, in particular in relation to upgrading availability on human mobility in Central Africa. The project aims to develop a methodology for the construction of a migration policies database in Central Africa; to create a "pilot" migration policies database, encompassing selected countries from the subregion; and to complete a "case-based" policy assessment of the social impact of migration policies on women and youth in Central Africa.

On all aspects, there are identifiable research gaps, three of which have been given particular significance in academic discussions. Facing a major issue of differentiated cultures as one major obstacle in linking

research and policy-making, there is a consensus that data and research remain key and indispensable to policy-making. Academic knowledge makes it possible to contextualize the causes and dynamics of migration flows and to provide critical knowledge on the impacts of migration. Furthermore, in response to short-term approaches, data and knowledge also enable the deconstruction of myths and populist narratives about both the determinants of migration and its impacts on different societies. In the long run, research can play a key role in the conceptual and theoretical framing of political debates. In this context, there is scope for cooperative activities between member states and UNESCO towards the development of new research programmes and networks.

## **4 Development Policy Implications**

In light of such considerations and relying on the existing research evidence, various policy implications may be explored alongside the development of further research programmes with a view to improving the research-policy nexus.

### **4.1 Management of the politics of migration and development**

Responding to migration and development challenges implies mobilizing a broad network of partners to facilitate consultative, multi-stakeholder processes, ensuring that migration priorities are in accordance with the country's overall development strategy.

Such an approach means considering people on the move in a comprehensive manner, no longer focusing on one single category of migrants but rather aiming at protecting all people on the move throughout the entire cycle of migration, in accordance with a transnational approach to migration and mobility. As underlined by Piperno (2014), *"In this perspective, the idea of a common advantage is not linked, like before, to the migratory movement as a 'spontaneous' element of social and economical development for all the countries involved, but more to the need for cooperation and reciprocity stemming from the interdependence of the countries involved in migratory flows"*. The general objective is to reframe the concept of a nexus between migration and development, reading it no longer solely as the tool for pursuing local development but also as the object of multi-level and multi-stakeholder transnational partnerships to manage mutual challenges and opportunities.

In more practical terms, this calls for the strengthening of multilateral dialogues. In this perspective, Keijzer, Heraud and Frankenhaeuser (2015) recommend interministerial forums, as a measure already implemented by many states that could be further encouraged for better policy coherence and cooperation. Such forums directly address potential lacks of cooperation and coordination. Even in a context within which the large majority of countries have made a general commitment to strengthen coordination in development cooperation, research has observed that many migration and development policies and projects are still carried out as part of a national framework: *"due to the inconsistent nature of planning M&D projects in the absence of overarching policies and strategies, as well as the differing levels of priority attached to this issue in partner countries' national development plans, development interventions in this area can be said to perform less well than other sectors, such as health or education, in terms of respecting internationally agreed principles of development effectiveness"*. Hence the need for reinforced coordination among stakeholders through the multiplication of platforms for dialogue and sharing of experiences, as well as further inclusion in multilateral forums (such as the GFMD).

Furthermore, as discussed in the previous section, multi-causal migration patterns are a key component of different livelihood strategies: the factors underlying migration are interrelated and simultaneously occur at different scales – national, local, household, and individual (FAO, 2016b). Conversely, academics have encouraged research on the link between migration and development to include three levels of analysis: the macro-level (the development context at the international or national scale, which includes migration regimes); the local or regional level; and the individual or community level involving factors related to migrants' direct sociocultural and economic environment (de Haas, 2010). Recognizing and addressing all three levels of analysis is important in assessing the impacts of development policies at each level, rejecting extrapolation from data collected at just one level.<sup>11</sup>

The ultimate objective for migration-development policies should not be to prevent or halt migration. The perception that migration is a “problem” is itself a reflection of certain conditions that deserve policy concern. In addition, even within the limitations of those structural conditions, migration is a form of adaptation that may take place in extreme, or on the contrary good, circumstances to which policy can make a difference.

A development-oriented focus on migration root causes cannot assume that reducing South-North migration flows – as a supposed precondition for the political legitimacy of the policy framework in receiving countries – will necessarily be effective in enhancing the life conditions of highly vulnerable migrants or potential migrants, particularly in many parts of Africa. By contrast, a comprehensive perspective on development, which is precisely what is required by the Sustainable Development Goals and in particular by the highly transversal SDG 16, needs to take account of all the relevant background conditions, including the profoundly unequal societies migrants come from, shaped by connections with global economic dynamics.

Based on this, a focus on the root causes of migration needs to be embedded in a holistic approach in strategic planning at national policy level, through the implementation of innovative policies, enabling new institutions in host and transition countries to manage migration driven, in the short to medium term, by more favourable living conditions in countries of origin.

#### **4.2 Circular mobility, diasporas and remittances**

A second set of policy implications revolves around the benefits of transnationality and circular mobility for countries of origin, transit and destination.

Among policy-makers, a more nuanced understanding of remittances and diasporic mobilization has developed as research and observation have revealed that remittances reduce poverty but do not necessarily trigger development. For this reason, academics have encouraged policy makers to recognize the equal importance of the macro-economic effects of remittances: *“the individual remittance receiver cannot overcome structural obstacles to development such as lack of infrastructure, perverse economic incentives, corruption, or bad governance”* (Newland, 2011). Academic research has highlighted the importance of maximizing the impacts of remittances and mobilization of diasporas by building the necessary conditions for such exchange and investments to occur (Keijzer *et al.*, 2015). This approach also involves strengthening financial inclusion. Beyond the approach of promoting “safer, quicker, faster” channels, there is a need to further expand our understanding and use of remittances in order actually to

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<sup>11</sup> In particular, de Haas uses the example of remittances, which are observed to bring about well-being in households in the countries of origin but not necessarily to foster national development.

leverage development in countries of origin. Similarly, transnational financial inclusion calls for a transnational approach involving destination countries and further linking financial systems and financial operators in countries of origin and destination (as in the case of the CeSPI platform).<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, remittances need to be considered more holistically, considering “social, political and cultural” remittances, which include ideas, norms, values as well as social capital. The transfer of “ideas on democratization” from European destination countries to countries of origin is one illustration of this phenomenon. However, such issues remain under-researched. Filling this gap calls in particular for full recognition of the role of diasporas: further attention should be given to their contribution to democracy and communication with local communities.

Practical development policy implications aimed at containing the brain and skills drain for countries of origin as well as at leveraging the positive impacts of migration on human development in countries of origin, transit and destination may include:

- Improved mobilization of diasporas, including through migrant associations, investments in local infrastructures and support for entrepreneurial projects in countries of origin. Such strategies may also involve philanthropic ventures as well as training and mentoring visits. Migrant associations can foster integration and reintegration processes, increasing bi-directional dialogue between local communities and institutions in the contexts of destination and origin. Fostering their potential calls for platforms for constant dialogue over time, as suggested by the European Commission itself (SEC (2011) 1353). And similarly, in the case of environmental change, it is necessary to promote the involvement of diasporas in improving adaptive capacity and resilience of origin communities to disasters and long-term changes.
- Stronger efforts in developing the availability and use of social networks in both sending and receiving countries to harness the tremendous potential of ICTs in transferring social remittances. ICT development programmes are expected to change the nature and scale of social remittance transfers.
- A focus on circular mobility that is both flexible and regular, away from an overemphasis on border control and return strategies. Such priority is strongly encouraged from both a research and a policy-making perspective (McLoughlin et al., 2011; Skeldon, 2012). In particular, such attention to circular migration responds to Keijzer, Heraud and Frankenhaeuser’s (2015) warning against development cooperation strategies that are subordinated to migration interests. Bearing this in mind would caution against migration-related conditionality (such as readmission) in development cooperation, which undermines the idea of a “triple win” in managing mutual opportunities and challenges. In more practical terms, this implies further developing multilateral migration policies towards more flexibility in the acquisition of legal status for migrants. Evidence shows that migrants are much more likely to return to their home countries if they have legal status in their country of settlement (Flahaux, 2015). In accordance with the first pillar of the European Union Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, further efforts should be made in

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<sup>12</sup> A person that is financially included multiplies the opportunities for savings, credit and investment as well as the possibilities of generating development for themselves, for the countries of origin and those of destination. For implementation examples, see the National Financial Inclusion of Migrants in Italy managed by the Italian Home Affairs Ministry in collaboration with CeSPI.

linking integration and reintegration strategies, with a view to favouring sustainable mobility. Moreover, such an approach implies supporting transnational networks of care services in the fields of training, education, information, mental health, as well as strengthening the portability of social rights, by improving the recognition of qualifications and professional experience.

### **4.3 Improving the role of research for policy making**

The conditions for research-informed evidence to be taken up by policy makers can be considerably improved. The challenge is to bring together the fragmented literature on policy-making in the fields of migration and development in order to enhance the research-policy nexus. What is sometimes termed a “knowledge overload” needs to be filtered through centralized knowledge management mechanisms. One body that has taken up the challenge is the European Commission’s Knowledge Centre for Migration and Demography, which was created with a view to providing policy-makers and the EU member states with an authoritative source of knowledge.

This objective also implies understanding the evolution and transformation of migration flows over time, with a view to avoid overemphasizing politically framed priorities that may refer to past challenges. Designing anticipatory policies calls for improved research to support “rapid reaction” tools, based on more flexible and rapid identification of emerging challenges and policy requirements (with a stronger involvement of policy-makers throughout the process).

In particular, future European demographic changes are among the most discussed and analyzed issues in academic spheres. One major difficulty in building scenarios on future European demographics lies in integrating migration flows. While labour migration flows are one of the most “stable” patterns of migration (and therefore rather easy to anticipate, at least in the fairly short term), “extraordinary” migration, linked to conflict, natural disasters or other geo-political shocks, remains on the contrary largely unpredictable.

Furthermore, comparative analysis across European countries will be crucial in understanding context-specific demographic trends. Indeed, those disparities produce rather important challenges in building a common management of migration flows at the European level. Experts have called for common action on immigration management and integration based on the political acknowledgment of immigration as a necessary driving force of population growth in European countries.

There is thus a need to restate the objective of migration and development policies: specifically, to assert that development cooperation should serve to reduce migration pressures on individuals in dangerous or vulnerable situations – which means counteracting the danger or vulnerability themselves. Understanding of the root causes of migration cannot be divorced from consideration of the logic and effects of migration regimes. In particular, academics have encouraged the development of better insight into the drivers of policy. Better analysis is required of the political, social and historical factors that shape national decision-making barriers to developing a common system as well as the political, operational and legal complexities associated with, for example, the Schengen agreement at the European level, regarded as an illustrative regional attempt to manage migration sustainably in a context of development. Sustainably managing migration will imply managing the politics of migration just as much as the migration flows themselves.

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