

CONCEPT NOTE | IMRF SIDE EVENT

ENHANCING THE CONTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS IN THE POST COVID-19 ERA

Tuesday, 17 May 2022

1:15 – 2:30 PM (EDT) | 7:15 – 8:30 PM (CET)

ZOOM

Organizers: IFAD, UN DESA, World Bank

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is one of the ten cross-cutting and guiding principles of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The Global Compact is grounded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

The contribution of migrants to the development of their countries of origin, through remittances, diaspora investments and trade, far exceeds official development assistance and foreign direct investment. The contribution of migrants to economies and societies of destination are similarly essential, as the recent COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated.

This webinar assesses progress made in implementing Objective 19 (Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries) and Objective 20 (Promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants) of the Global Compact. The webinar will also contribute to strengthening the global evidence base on international migration and how this may support an informed policy debate (Objective 1). Furthermore, it aims to identify how the transnational engagement of migrants can be further strengthened to maximize their vast potential. The webinar will pay specific attention to how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected these contributions and what actions can be taken to leverage their contributions as countries are building back from the crisis.

Good practices and recommendations identified by the webinar will inform the first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), to be held in May 2022, when the status of implementation of the Global Compact will be assessed and, in particular, Roundtable 3, which will review, inter alia, objectives 19 and 20. The seminar will also inform the negotiations on the Progress Declaration, which will be adopted during the Forum.

OBJECTIVE

This side event will focus explicitly on the contribution of migrants and migration to sustainable development.¹

It will provide Member States and other stakeholders with concrete suggestions on how to promote implementation of objectives 19 and 20 of the Global Compact as well to build on the *Menu of Options for the Considerations of Heads of State and Government* in the recent *Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond* process.²

¹ https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbdl416/files/resources_files/imrf_roadmap_calendar_-_2021-2022.pdf

² https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/financing_for_development_covid19_part_ii_hosg.pdf

BACKGROUND

Despite the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, international remittance volumes to low- and middle- income countries held firm throughout 2020, recording only a modest 1.6 per cent decline to US\$549 billion, in the face of one of the deepest recorded global recessions, and increased again in 2021 to US\$589 billion, registering a 7.3 per cent increase.

This was possible thanks to the resilience of hundreds of millions of migrants who continued to send money to their families and communities back home, regardless of the economic challenges they were facing in their host countries. Remittances are critically important for developing countries, in particular for rural and more vulnerable communities, particularly in times of crisis. Almost half of all remittance flows go to rural areas, accounting for over US\$200 billion annually.

The pandemic, while creating major challenges, has also created new opportunities for the global remittance market. Migrants increased their use of regulated and digital channels in many corridors. Increased use of digital channels in many cases brought down the costs of transferring remittances. Private sector operators adapted their business models and policy makers provided the necessary enabling environment.

The webinar will also briefly discuss the impact on remittances of policies and measures to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism. Lastly, the webinar will consider the potential for concessional financing facilities for migrants.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA EDT | CET

1:15 | 7:15

HIGH-LEVEL REMARKS

H.E. Mario Adolfo Búcaro Flores, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Guatemala

OPENING REMARKS

Jyotsna Puri, Associate Vice-President, Strategy and Knowledge Department, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

1:25 | 7:25

PANEL DISCUSSION

MODERATOR:

Pedro De Vasconcelos, Manager, Financing Facility for Remittances (FFR), IFAD

PRESENTATIONS BY THE PANELLISTS:

Gibril Faal, visiting professor in practice, Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa (FLIA), London School of Economics (LSE), co-founder of GK Partners and RemitAid

Emmanuel Ssemambo, Head, External Sector Statistics Division, Statistics Department, Bank of Uganda (tbc)

Leon Isaacs, Chief Executive Officer, Developing Markets Associates Global (DMAG)

Sonia Plaza, Senior Economist, Co-chair Remittances and Diaspora, KNOMAD, Finance, Competitiveness and Innovation Global Practice Africa East, World Bank

Stefanie Scharf, Head of Division, Policy Issues of Displacement and Migration, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

2:00 | 8:00

INTERVENTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

(Member States and stakeholders)

2:20 | 8:20

RESPONSES BY THE PANELLISTS

2:25 | 8:25

CLOSING REMARKS

Maria Francesca Spatolisano, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

INDICATIVE GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE PANELISTS

Too often, the public debate in countries of destination focuses on the short-term challenges of migrant integration without taking into account the longer term, positive contribution of migrants. What is the current state of affairs of the evidence on the role of migrants and migration in the economies of host countries? How can this evidence be better integrated in narratives on migrants and migration?

What is the role of the private sector in contributing to the further implementation of objectives 19 and 20 of the Global Compact? How can the private sector support Member States in implementing the recommendations of the *Menu of Options for the Considerations of Heads of State and Government* in the recent *Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond* process?

Digitalization has received a strong boost as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. What are the ramifications of the digitalization process for remittance markets and for costs of transferring remittances? What is the impact of increased digitalization of remittance markets on inequalities within and between countries?

How can the development community support actions in favour of objectives 19 and 20 of the Global Compact? What were the implications of the COVID-19 crisis for implementing these objectives?

What interactions are needed between public and private sector stakeholders to support remittance senders and recipients?

What are some of the priorities in improving the flow and reducing the costs of remittances to Africa? How can the impact of remittances to Africa be strengthened? Beyond remittances, how are diasporas from Africa and elsewhere supporting their communities of origin in light of the setbacks generated by the COVID-19 crisis?

ORGANIZERS



Investing in rural people

[International Fund for Agricultural Development \(IFAD\)](#)



[Financing Facility for Remittances \(FFR\)](#)



[UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs \(UN DESA\)](#)



[THE WORLD BANK
World Bank](#)



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PRACTICAL ASPECTS

The webinar will take place within the framework of the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF). For further information, please contact a.casano@ifad.org, hovy@un.org and splaza@worldbank.org.

