



Migration and Development

A SDC Global Programme



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Why migration is a key issue for the SDC

Migration has always been an individual strategy to escape poverty, reduce risks and build a better life.

- ▶ **This strategy is consistent with the fundamental objectives of development cooperation.**

Every economy needs a mobile work force. This demand has always triggered population movements. Globalisation is reinforcing these movements in all regions of the world.

- ▶ **Labour migration is an important aspect of sustainable economic and social development.**

On the one hand, migrants contribute to prosperity, progress and, consequently, development in destination countries. On the other, the countries of origin benefit from remittances and from the know-how that those returning home bring with them.

- ▶ **Migrants are important actors of development.**

People who leave their home country take a step into the unknown and face risks. Unrealistic expectations, lack of information and inadequate legal protection can drive women, men and children into the hands of human traffickers or lead to the exploitation of labour migrants in many countries of destination.

- ▶ **Protection, favourable framework conditions and adequate information are important both from a humanitarian and a developmental perspective.**

Sustainable development in a globalised world must increasingly be based on cooperation among the various actors so that migration can achieve its potential and reduce the negative effects.

- ▶ **Interdepartmental cooperation, bilateral and regional partnerships, and global dialogue are the central pillars of the Swiss migration foreign policy.**



The Global Programme Migration and Development (GPMD)

- gives central importance to migration for sustainable development
- aims to ensure that migrants are seen as a positive force for development
- works closely with the Federal Office for Migration and other federal agencies, and carries out development-related activities within the framework of migration partnerships
- is SDC's centre of expertise on migration and development
- promotes the development and exchange of knowledge on the complex inter-linkages between migration and development
- supports the inclusion of migration in development policy and in SDC's programmes and projects
- strengthens Switzerland's long-standing involvement in the international dialogue on migration
- initiates specific projects and implements them independently or with partners

“Migration is a courageous expression of an individual's will to overcome adversity and live a better life.”

Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General



Five pillars of the Global Programme Migration and Development (GPMD)

The Federal Council Dispatch to Parliament on International Cooperation 2013–2016 identifies migration as one of the nine priority themes of Swiss development assistance. On the basis of the dispatch, the GPMD pursues the following five fields of action.

International dialogue

Migration is a global phenomenon and must therefore be tackled both within the scope of domestic migration policy and at the global level. The Global Programme is active in various settings to achieve closer international cooperation and plays a pioneering role in this regard – particularly because it can bring its practical experience from the field to the policy dialogue and because it has been successful in ensuring that new approaches and declarations of intent are implemented.

Acceptable working conditions

Migrants from developing countries often fall victim to violations of basic labour and human rights law. The Global Programme aims to protect migrant workers and to enable them to take full advantage of their migration experience. It is working to improve the regulation of labour migration both in countries of destination and origin as well as in defining policies at the international level.

Contributions of the diaspora

Remittances from migrants are a major source of revenue in many countries of origin. The Global Programme helps governments improve the overall national framework conditions and create incentives for diaspora organisations to enable financial transfers and make a direct contribution to sustainable development. In addition, migrants can use the experience gained abroad to advance development in their home countries. Knowledge transfer is the focus of various projects with diaspora groups from Asia, Africa and the Balkans.

Integrating migration in development planning

Population movements impact all areas of life in the most-affected countries. In the context of the policy dialogue and in its operational projects, the Global Programme aims to include migration as a factor for development into the local, national and regional strategies to combat poverty. This also applies to sectoral policies, such as labour market and trade. In addition, in countries where migration is an important social and economic issue the programme supports the elaboration of coherent migration policies.

Swiss migration policy

In Switzerland, several government ministries deal with the issue of migration. They cooperate closely and seek to define a coherent policy line for the implementation of decisions and projects. The Global Programme brings the development perspective to this dialogue and carries out specific development-related tasks within the framework of migration partnerships with countries such as Nigeria and Tunisia.

Examples of the Global Programme's activities

International dialogue on migration: In 2011, Switzerland chaired the **Global Forum on Migration and Development**. SDC took a leading role through its contribution of development-specific knowledge. SDC has supported the forum for many years and has made a decisive contribution to bringing about some fundamental conceptual changes: Migration is no longer perceived as a problem for development cooperation, but rather as an opportunity. Migration is now anchored in the political agenda of the United Nations and is regarded as an important factor of international cooperation. Population dynamics and demographic developments are key elements in designing the new framework to succeed the Millennium Development Goals after 2015.

KNOMAD stands for "Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development" – a **World Bank** initiative. SDC supports this new platform, which, in collaboration with academics and the Global Migration Group collects the results of studies conducted worldwide. They show the impact of migration on development, and vice versa. The aim is to provide decision-makers with information based on sound scientific research.

Involvement of the diaspora: Tunisia is seeking the support of its citizens abroad. The Tunisian diaspora community in Switzerland, for its part, is very keen to support its home country. SDC is acting as a bridge-builder by facilitating contacts between the authorities and civil society organisations in Switzerland and Tunisia. Together with partners from Switzerland, in 2012 government representatives from Tunis established the basis of future cooperation: Diaspora organisations receive support from SDC and Swiss cantonal authorities for projects in Tunisia, where they are assisted and monitored by the Swiss programme office together with Tunisian partners in order to ensure that the investments are used efficiently.



Rights and protection for migrants: In a project supported by SDC, government officials and human rights organisations in **Sri Lanka** were advised by lawyers from the Gulf states about laws and practices concerning migrant workers in the countries of their region. This important information is now used as teaching material in preparatory courses. These contacts have made it possible, among other things, to locate mistreated domestic employees in the Gulf states and repatriate them. Similar projects have also been financed in Nepal, Bangladesh and Qatar.

Information and training: In **Nepal**, where every second family is affected by migration, its impact is particularly significant. SDC takes account of this by including the aspect of migration in the planning and implementation of projects in such fields as human rights and education. For instance, it offers two-month vocational training courses for migrants. Workers who have completed this short course and have been fully informed about their rights and the risks they run are able to reduce their migration costs (because better information reduces the risk of exploitation). This also helps them to earn higher wages, about one third more, in their country of destination (because they are professionally better qualified).

Contribution to migration partnerships: SDC is an important player in international migration cooperation within the federal administration. The most important instrument of this interdepartmental cooperation is the migration partnership, whose purpose is to contribute to greater mutual understanding of migration and provide the framework for concrete projects. As part of Switzerland's migration partnership with **Nigeria**, for example, SDC helps the Nigerian diaspora transfer knowledge from Switzerland to selected educational institutions in Lagos.

“Those who do not look beyond their national borders when drafting migration policy will fail.”

Simonetta Sommaruga,
Swiss Federal Councillor



“Migration Is Development – Today, more than a billion people rely on international and internal migration to escape poverty and conflict, adapt to environmental and economic shocks, and improve the income, health, and education of their families.”

Peter Sutherland, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on International Migration and Development

New impetus

Since 2008, SDC has been breaking new ground with the Global Programmes Climate Change, Water, Food Security, and Migration and Development.

In addition to existing bi- and multilateral work, this approach makes it possible to develop solutions to global challenges through worldwide political dialogue and concrete projects.

In the context of migration and development, SDC brings its concrete field experience to the international policy dialogue. It has been successful in ensuring that innovative approaches are discussed and implemented in practice. By linking dialogue and action, the Global Programme explicitly promotes the development and exchange of knowledge on the complex interaction between migration and development.



Facts and figures on migration and development

- In 2013, the UN reported that there were some 232 million migrants worldwide.
- According to UNHCR, around 15 million people in the world are recognised as refugees.
- Of the 164 million migrants from the South, barely half of them are living in the North; the rest are living in other countries in the South.
- Almost 50% of the world's migrants are women.
- In 2013, migrants sent remittances totalling approximately CHF 414 billion to developing countries – three times the total amount of global official development assistance.
- Remittances from migrants are crisis resistant: after the financial crisis in 2009, these transfers declined by only 5%, while direct foreign investments plummeted by 89%.

“Migration is an expression of the human aspiration for dignity, safety and a better future. It is part of the social fabric, part of our very make-up as a human family.”

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General

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