

Highlights of Part I of the 2016 International Dialogue on Migration.

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The first part of the 2016 International Dialogue on Migration took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York on February 29 and March 1. Some 300 participants met about six months after UN member states adopted Agenda 2030, setting out 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Perhaps it was significant that the meeting started on Leap year Day, for it was a rare event: a meeting on international migration at UN headquarters. This, in itself, was important; such discussions normally take place in Geneva, and the New York-based national delegations, for the most part, do not cover migration issues closely.

So this first part of the IDM was an opening to a process of mutual education between Geneva and New York. As such, it was a valuable connector between the SDGs and the migration policy communities, which would prove its worth at the September 2016 General Assembly Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants.

The first, keynote speaker at the IDM also highlighted the link between realization of the SDGs and the role of cities. The speaker was Mayor Denis Coderre of Montreal, Canada. He pointed out that migration is first and foremost an urban phenomenon. International movements become local realities; those moving cease to be statistics and become women and men and children looking for a new home. For cities, the mayor insisted, immigration is not a problem. It is a resource, a key to the vitality and success of the great global cities. His words were a confirmation and should be an inspiration, not just for other cities but for national governments as well. Yes, we need to address the vulnerabilities that often accompany the migration experience—especially the experience of unauthorized migrants. But it is wrong to look at migration only as a source of problems. Rather, the focus needs to be equally on the benefits of migration for migrants, their countries of origin and their new countries and communities of residence.

Nearly every one of the almost 40 speakers in the plenaries and roundtable sessions noted the importance of including migrants and migration in the SDGs.

It is difficult to summarize such a full day of discussions, but I would like to highlight one additional question that dominated many of the sessions: how to track progress toward the

SDGs over the next 14 years? How can governments know that they are moving in the right direction? What tools are available to measure success and identify gaps?

We need to start with what we have, such as IOM's Migration Governance Framework (MiGoF), and we need to innovate, developing new ways of gathering and analyzing and using data. With the challenge set out at the UN Summit on Refugees and Migrants, to develop a Global Compact on Migration by 2018, methods of tracking progress have become absolutely central. Part I of the 2016 IDM presented three innovations in data gathering that IOM has been pursuing.

1. The *Migration Governance Index* is being developed by IOM in collaboration with the Economist Intelligence Unit. It offers a way for governments to assess gaps, priorities and progress against SDG Target 10.7, in which states committed themselves to facilitate 'safe, orderly, regular and responsible migration, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.' The Index has put forward indicators in five policy areas, drawn from the MiGoF:

- Institutional capacity
- Migrants' rights
- Labor and economic investments
- Migration management
- Partnerships

At the IDM, the Economist Intelligence Unit previewed results from the pilot project that applied the index to 15 highly diverse countries. One central finding was that this form of assessment can be done in a complex, multi-faceted policy arena, connected to so many other issues, in a way that permits comparison and mutual learning. Already, preliminary findings suggest several factors that correlate with high scores on the Index. They include 1) transparency on the rules of migration, 2) strong lead agencies on migration, and 3) cross-border collaboration.

2. The *Gallup World Poll* has worked with IOM for several years, developing a system to measure outcomes related to the SDGs on a regional basis. They have included questions about migration in the annual global surveys of the World Poll. Thus far, the pilot projects have put these questions to 183,000 adults in 40 countries.

3. The *Global Pulse Initiative* is an effort to use "big data" to inform migration policy. Big data refers to the wealth of information embedded in online transactions that most of us engage in every day. When we read a book online, or watch a film, buy a shirt, text a friend, pay a bill, map a route or book a trip, we leave behind a trail of electronic bread crumbs that, in the aggregate, reveal huge amounts of data on the movements and habits of 21st-century humans.

Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Facebook and other giant corporations (as well as national intelligence agencies) are learning how to mine this data, and it is important that migration policy should also be informed by this powerful source.

With explanations of these three initiatives, Part I of the 2016 IDM focused on how to track implementation of the migration-related SDGs. But two broader points also came up in this context. One is the observation that almost all of the SDGs that do not mention migration explicitly involve migrants and migration, and many of them cannot be realized without including migrants in any interventions. Consider, as just one example, SDG Target 4.1: to 'ensure that girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education...' How can this target be reached when a million refugee and displaced children are out of school, as they are today?

A second important observation was that some urgent migration issues were left out of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. This is particularly the case with problems related to forcible displacement and crisis-induced migration. This gap gives even greater importance to the two Global Compacts expected in 2018, one on refugees and one on migration. Future IDMs will undoubtedly take up these issues.