

# INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION 2019

Unlocking the potential of youth  
to respond to the new challenges  
and opportunities of migration

#IDM2019 #ForMigration



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GENEVA INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE CENTRE (CICG)

## SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

*Unlocking the potential of youth to respond to the new challenges and opportunities of migration* was the title given to the second and last session of IOM's International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) of 2019, celebrated at the Geneva International Conference Centre, Switzerland, on 15 and 16 October.

The second session of the **#IDM2019** gathered more than 380 participants from youth organizations, high-level government offices, NGOs, academia, private sector and international and regional organizations such as the UN, the European Union and the African Union. The diverse group of speakers in terms of origin, age and background offered a comprehensive portrait of actions, practices and opportunities to support and encourage youth involvement in policy and decision-making processes.

The opening session was led by the IOM Director General, António Vitorino, the Egyptian Ministry of Social Solidarity, H.E. Ms. Ghada Waly, the European Union Deputy Secretary General for External Action Service, Mr Christian Leffler, the Turkish Deputy Minister of Family, Labour and Social Services, Mr Ahmet Erdem and the Ugandan Minister for Internal Affairs Mr Gen Odongo Jeje Abu. The speakers highlighted the importance of harnessing the potential of youth to unlock the opportunities and recognized the unprecedented awareness and engagement of youth. There was a common acknowledgement of the need to invest in young people while recognizing them as leaders and agents of change to achieve the required transformations towards sustainable and resilient societies.

IOM commits to "listen, learn and act" following the lessons learnt and recommendations made by youth and other speakers through the identification of strategies and partnerships that contribute to supporting young migrants. As speakers stressed, the focus is not just about working for the youth, but rather working with them, involving them and creating an environment that recognizes solutions they identify for themselves.

This **#IDM2019** was structured around six main panels, and time was also dedicated to a presentation of young migrant voices, an African Union case study and a side event on "African Youth and the SDGs". The panels covered:

- 1) The role of technology in enabling opportunities over risks;
- 2) Boosting young people's potential for development through diaspora engagement;
- 3) Youth as agents of integration and social cohesion;
- 4) Enabling youth to overcome environmental challenges;
- 5) Building the adaptation and resilience of young people on the move; and

## 6) The implications of the future of work on young migrants.

Numerous examples showed local, national, regional and worldwide practices to improve quality of life for young migrants, including the establishment of alliances such as the EU–AU youth cooperation HUB and the Young Mediterranean voices initiative; introducing storytelling as a way of confronting the stereotypes and negative narratives about migration, as well as bridging different cultures; and the essential role of the Diaspora to ensure long-lasting and sustainable responses. It was also during this time that the first ever – yet to be published – Africa Migration Report was introduced. The report aims to rebalance the conversation about African migration away from the dominant, yet overly narrow, narrative of irregular migration to Europe.

**Below are the outcomes and conclusions of the discussions that took place in Geneva based on the three main gaps identified in the first IDM session in New York:**



### DATA AND STRATEGIES

- ✓ Develop strong data and statistics for evidence-based policies.
- ✓ Benefit from technology to gather non-traditional data for immediate responses.
- ✓ Enable an environment that connect countries of origin, transit and destination to find cohesive solutions.



### MAINSTREAM YOUTH

- ✓ Involve youth diaspora in their countries of origin and destination.
- ✓ Harness the potential of youth to identify opportunities and develop informed policies.
- ✓ Develop open spaces for communication and interaction with youth.
- ✓ Promote education as a tool to break down barriers.
- ✓ Involve youth to respond to environmental challenges.
- ✓ Equip youth to tackle the challenges related to the future of work.



### WELL-BEING OF YOUNG MIGRANTS

- ✓ Carry out comprehensive solutions to address social cohesion and integration.
- ✓ Address youth vulnerabilities: physical and psychosocial needs.
- ✓ Challenge realities and narratives.
- ✓ Promote storytelling as a way to counteract stereotypes, fake news and misperceptions while bridging different cultures.
- ✓ Increase awareness by listening and amplifying their voices.

#### A. DATA AND STRATEGIES

It is necessary to build the capacity for better collection of data and statistics to understand who these young migrants are, where they are and what their needs are. New technologies allow for greater opportunities and possibilities to gather non-traditional data; however, they require more responsibilities. One challenge with the use of technology includes the need to combat and counteract misinformation and fake news. To be equitable, there is a need to increase connectivity because about half of the population is not yet connected. Strategies need to link countries of origin, transit and destination.

##### - **Develop strong data and statistics for evidence-based policies:**

As there is not a universal definition of youth, disaggregating data by age can provide clearer space for actual analysis and targeted responses. Big data can contribute by addressing the challenge of gathering immediate figures. Non-traditional data can provide more flexible and timely information. The *Big Data for Migration Alliance* (BD4M), launched by the Joint Research Centre from the European Union in 2018, includes a range of tools that vary from mobile phones to air passenger data to social media such as LinkedIn or Facebook, among others. Likewise, non-traditional data may provide spaces to gather information on circular and irregular migration that traditional data cannot. Potential

limitations rely on the fact that big data is mainly collected by private sector; issues such as ownership, technological sustainability and costs may hinder its access.

- **Enable an environment that promotes cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination:** This can include better collection of data and statistics, the creation of platforms that connect skilled migrants with those who require help, as well as the recognition of qualifications, skills development or networking. One example of cooperation is the continental strategy launched by the African Union in April this year called the “1 million by 2021 initiative” which aims to direct investment towards millions of African youth in the areas of Employment, Entrepreneurship, Education and Engagement, through leveraging partnerships and private sector opportunities. This is a wide-ranging endeavour that looks at the development of start-ups and promotes the establishment of internships and apprenticeships to nurture leadership skills in young people.

## **B. YOUTH MAINSTREAMING**

Empowering youth is an investment for creating stronger future generations. Youth have a role to play in sustainable development which can be enhanced by ensuring their access to capacity-building, knowledge, technology and training.

- **Involve Young Diaspora as key agents of change**  
Young diaspora contribute to their countries of origin, transit and destination through remittances, by transferring knowledge and skills, by connecting people and resources or by sharing and understanding other cultures, which helps to break negative and harmful stereotypes. Recommendations to engage diaspora include: (i) gathering a sound knowledge of the diaspora abroad (assessing their needs, their numbers or how are they are willing to contribute); (ii) establishing proper means of communicate with them; (iii) enabling an environment to engage them through the development of policies like the right to citizenship or vote; (iv) developing strategic partnerships between the State, international organizations and civil society to build frameworks to link the youth with the diaspora; (v) generating outreach and partnership policies to involve diaspora: numerous examples show their critical role in crisis management; and finally (vi) enhancing national policy and co-developing a national migration strategy. The *Young Malagasy Diaspora programme*, organized by the Government of Madagascar in partnership with IOM, is a successful practice that involves young Malagasy diaspora volunteers with local communities by facilitating the transfer of skills, knowledge and experience. Such engagement challenges stereotypes and helps break down barriers and build connections.
- **Harness the potential of youth to unlock opportunities for more informed and inclusive policies and strategies**  
Their active participation in policy dialogue, good governance, social justice, inclusion and social cohesion have proven to be key for the identification of long-standing and sustainable solutions. Several examples showed how involving youth in policymaking provides a more inclusive, integrated and innovative approach.
- **Develop open spaces of communication and interaction with youth**  
Clear spaces for communication should be created to allow youth to learn, engage and be empowered through meaningful participation. Several initiatives were introduced in which young people’s voices have been invaluable in decision-making processes. This includes subjects from stability and conflict prevention to development and achievement of SDGs or promoting other international frameworks (such as the Paris Agreement or Sendai Framework). Examples of youth involvement initiatives include the International Youth Organization for Ibero-America, the EU–African Union Youth Cooperation Hub and the UN Major Group for Children and Youth.

- **Promote education as a powerful tool to break down barriers**  
Education is a powerful tool for youth integration. Schools or learning centres are the first place for integration and serve as a bridge between young migrants and local youth by promoting dialogue, mutual understanding and cohesion. An example given was *TandEM* – Towards Empowered Migration Youth in Southern Europe –, which implements languages classes, inter-religious and intercultural dialogues, and social media campaigns in universities connecting local and newcomer students fighting xenophobia and prejudice while promoting inclusion.
- **Involve youth to respond to environmental challenges**  
Youth can play a key role in building resilience and contributing to disaster risk reduction. Solutions to address environmental challenges have to be found and implemented collectively, and this includes youth as potential group of exodus, especially from rural areas to cities due to climate change. *Senagriculture* is a successful example from Senegal that involves technology and innovation that bring together rural supply in line with urban demands, highlighting the need for young people to participate, increase awareness, involve the diaspora, leverage the knowledge and ensure that young farmers have access to key information so they can learn to improve and share their concerns.
- **Integrate youth while tackling the future of work**  
Preparing youth at home and abroad, investing deeply in the skills on demand and looking at the future of work requires of a holistic view that considers relevant drivers such as technology, demographic transformations, climate change and setbacks in globalization. Automatization and digitalization will require adaptation and filling the gaps that exist among countries and economies. Informal economies will be difficult to manage in contexts highly dependent on technology. Work in the future will be mostly done online and could be done remotely. Access to platforms will prevent people from migrating in search of jobs, a model that challenges social protection and other labour rights. Linking skills with those who require them will be mainly done through online platforms.

### C. WELL-BEING OF YOUNG MIGRANTS

There is a need for comprehensive solutions that foster inclusion and social cohesion. Solutions require a holistic view that consider young migrants' vulnerabilities and needs, their psychosocial and physical well-being, but also their involvement in addressing negative perceptions, stereotypes and narratives to counteract a language of hate and establish bridges based on commonalities.

- **Comprehensive solutions to address social cohesion**  
Social cohesion is a continuous process that requires a multidimensional approach while keeping the youth at the centre. This includes the development of public policies; empowering through representation and inclusion at all levels; building resilience through education, health care and social dialogue; adding value to peer-to-peer learning; establishing mentorship opportunities and looking for synergies “with the other” to eradicate stigmas and contribute to decreased inequalities.
- **Address youth vulnerabilities, physical and psychosocial needs**  
Physical and psychosocial stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other mental health issues or disabilities require specific assistance and attention. The aim should be to identify the fears that disable and prevent young migrants from participating and integrating in their new communities. Specific well-being programmes need to provide counselling support while fostering administrative process and easier access to health care. Psychosocial support with a holistic approach involves all aspects of the person including cultural, religious and social, and is an approach that contributes to successful integration processes.

- **Challenge realities and narratives**

Promotion of negative narrative through fake news or eco-chambers<sup>1</sup> should be a central focus. There is a need for building awareness on how social media contributes to the negative rhetoric around minorities and migrants, leading to hate speech and misinformation. Evidence has been generated linking violent attacks with the polarizing effect of social media; the existence of eco-chambers and the lack of exchange of ideas between different communities have increased negative perceptions, xenophobia and radicalization. Effective strategies require solutions targeting both offline and online spaces. Efforts must be made for more interactions between these segregated communities, such as increasing analysis and data that renders the negative speech inaccurate. The new Africa Migration Report responds to the need to build a new narrative and perception of African migration that is nuanced, and fact based. The report highlights that African youth are not only a large part of the conversation regarding how migration within the continent will evolve, but they will be one of the prime determinants of its success. Unpacking the data shows that most African migrants remain within Africa, and while women constitute almost half of the total migration, they stay relatively close to home, whereas men travel further.

- **Storytelling as a way to confront stereotypes and build bridges between cultures, while combating fake news and eco-chambers**

Using stories as simple as the love to a grandmother can help build bridges among communities and identify commonalities between youngsters from different origins, therefore showcasing the human side of migration. Putting a face to the story helps leverage influence with meaningful answers and can help break eco-chambers. The YouTube channel BENI, a collection of young migrant voices or images of children showing their wishes for the future in refugee camps in Yemen, are some examples that help raise awareness among young people.

- **Increase awareness by listening to youth and amplifying their voices**

This is not about showing only the successful stories, but rather learning what happened to those who did not succeed and those who had to return. Learning from their needs and vulnerabilities and how they confronted their lack of integration or reintegration will help to identify solutions and prevent these stories from happening again.

There is a need to look at the big picture: demographics and technology are transforming our lives in an everchanging world where the environment or the future of work play a key role for migrants' inclusion and social cohesion. Actors need to be engaged with youth, address their vulnerabilities, work for the youth, with the youth and by the youth and give them a more prominent role in the political agendas.

This summary is not exhaustive. A more comprehensive report will be available in due course highlighting the messages and specific good practices shared during this session and the previous one carried out in February in New York.

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<sup>1</sup> Eco-chamber: An environment in which a person encounters only beliefs or opinions that coincide with their own, so that their existing views are reinforced, and alternative ideas are not considered.