



## Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
1 December 2015

Original: English

---

### Commission for Social Development

#### Fifty-fourth session

3-12 February 2016

#### Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development

and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:  
priority theme: rethinking and strengthening social development  
in the contemporary world

### Statement submitted by Curia Generalizia Agostiniana and Passionists International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

---

\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

### **Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development in the Contemporary World with a Focus on Migration**

Augustinians International (AI), and Passionists International (PI), ECOSOC accredited NGOs at the United Nations, are convinced that rethinking social development in the contemporary world calls for action addressing root causes of poverty, inequality and injustice. Migration is one especially important area where multiple root causes of poverty, inequality and injustices are operative in hindering social development. Thus, AI and PI welcome each and every Sustainable Development Goal, none of which can be met without national as well as worldwide success in achieving justice for the world's 232 million migrants.

In view of the general framework of Agenda 2030, to “leave no one behind,” we contend that development premised on people-centred, inclusiveness, equality and equity, and values of social justice must necessarily include all the different groups in society including migrants of all kinds. Migration as a global process representing both opportunity as well as challenge is ever more obvious today. Research is replete with tremendous socioeconomic development and creation of new opportunities in both homeland and host land fostered by migration. Migrants and diasporas are “agents of development” in their homeland by the substantial resources they transmit back home through knowledge, new opportunities, remittances, investments, and philanthropic donations. It is expected that by the end of 2015 officially recorded remittances would reach half a trillion dollars. These remittances have huge impacts on eradication of poverty as they are constant funding sources for family sustenance. These are all acknowledged in Sustainable Development Goals and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The many contributions of migration to development are matched by the plethora of risks and challenges associated with migration: namely human rights abuses, loss of social cohesion and insecurity.

AI and PI welcome the significant mention of migration in the declaration and targets of Agenda 2030, especially the recognition of upholding and protecting the rights of migrants in all situations irrespective of their status. We welcome the Declaration accompanying the Sustainable Development Goals explicitly including the phrase, “We will cooperate internationally to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration involving full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants regardless of migration status, of refugees and of displaced persons” (par 23, 25, 29). Recognizing the seven targets that refer explicitly to migrants and migration (targets 5.2, 8.7, 8.8, 10.7, 10.c, 16.2, 17.18), we firmly believe the rest of the goals and targets are “migration or displacement-relevant” because they are “for all” and target vulnerable people — which the Declaration of the Agenda clearly says includes migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons.

We believe it is necessary to grasp the multifaceted nature of migration within the contemporary world. Migration may take several forms with varying implications, possible interaction with other areas of social development injustice, and cascading effects upon generations to come. Some migrants seek to leave their home country because of war or other forms of violence, economic disadvantage, persecution, environmental degradation or natural disasters. Some migrants temporarily seek improved working conditions. Some migrants are students leaving

a stable home situation for educational advantages elsewhere. Some migrants move from one location to another within one country. Seafarers constitute a special kind of mobile population. Human trafficking presents a special kind of mobile victim. In summary, the drivers of migration are those of choice, such as search for better opportunities and family unification; and those of necessity, including threats of various social-economic, political and environmental kinds.

While these kinds of migration can be markedly different with diverse causes and effects, diverse implications and demands for being met by diverse strategies, they all share similarities enabling them all to be named “migration” and also enabling each of them to be approached by rethinking and strengthening social development. In other words, migrants in general can be victims of bad development and inept social policies yet can also be enablers of development in all fronts: home, transit and destination countries.

As a matter of special focus, we recognize world cities as one place where the intersection between social development and migration is felt. The true test of the management of migration and migrants and its challenges are seen in cities and their authorities. The teeming numbers of people fleeing or leaving their lands and territories in search of a better life often end up in towns and cities. This phenomenon contributes to the evolving new identity and diversity of modern cities and towns. One of the most vulnerable and yet valuable groups in city life and systems is the migrant, especially children and women, against who the worse forms of abuse, exploitation, discrimination, violence and human rights violations occur. Many of them are still denied access to essential services, including health, housing, the justice system and education. Statistics show that foreign-born households are more exposed to housing affordability problems with the propensity of living in overcrowded and unsound housing. Many migrants and refugee families are often faced with an impassable frontier to even register children for school. As New York Times reported on October 22, 2014, “For some immigrant children school is harder to enter than the country itself.” The situation is worse for migrants of undocumented status.

AI and PI strongly condemn development policies that pay no attention to the human person, that may encourage xenophobic tendencies that trivialize the tragedy of thousands of people fleeing from war and persecution or of those moving of their own volition. We cannot be blinded to the current helpless migratory situation in Europe and Middle East. We condemn any forced migration and the significant risks endured by migrants seeking refuge and asylum away from dangers at home. We maintain that long term policies and immediate humanitarian assistance must be included in responding to the issues of forced migration today. Improved friendly and just border policies and protection of all migrants in transit, especially those in crisis, should be seen more from a humanitarian than a political lens.

Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world from migration perspectives should have the Sustainable Development Goals as basis. This demands ensuring the implementation of all the migration-related targets and that all goals and targets are realized for migrants, irrespective of status. Thus all cities and areas must be inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (cf goal 16). People-centered urbanization can work towards making our cities safe, welcoming and accommodating for all peoples irrespective of migratory status. Migrants, like

all city dwellers, must be able to find affordable housing, a clean environment, a decent job, healthcare services and above all the protection of their human rights.

We recommend focus on national and international policies to facilitate safe and efficient flow of remittances to maximize their impact on economic growth and development. Favourable regulatory frameworks should be put in place monitoring all corridors of remittance flow to ensure that all comply with the suggested 3% remittance cost and to eliminate any monopoly. We believe that member states could work towards reducing remittance transaction costs to 1% by 2025 and to fund migrant and diaspora transboundary investment schemes. Above all, conscientious efforts at addressing root causes and alternatives to forced and dangerous migration must be a constituent component of this vision for migration to be choice and not necessity.

Finally we affirm articles 72 and 74 of Agenda 2030's position that, "A robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review framework will make a vital contribution to this agenda in ensuring no one is left behind..." Here civil society partnerships and improved monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals can both play interdependent roles. Thus AI and PI recommend legal provisions within the system allowing civil society access to funding for implementation and review mechanisms by providing parallel reports.

---