

IFAD contribution to the 2020 GCM Regional Review of the UNECE region

Objective 20

In only a few months COVID-19 has changed the world. Governments everywhere have responded with a mix of policies to contain the pandemic, ranging from quarantines to the closure of borders and businesses.

Migrant workers are among the most directly affected by the economic fallout of this crisis. There are several reasons for this: (i) they deliver needed skills and provide essential services to important economic sectors, such as construction, hospitality, health care, tourism, food, agribusiness, transport, and domestic and care work; (ii) the majority of migrant workers are from LMICs and must continue working to support themselves and their family members, by sending remittances home on a regular basis; (iii) the primary focus of most host-country governments has been to help their own citizens through stimulus packages, unemployment assistance and related payments, which have not necessarily reached migrant workers who often lack unemployment benefits; and (iv) many migrant workers remain stranded in host countries due to lockdowns, while their own country governments are unable to repatriate them since transport has not yet normalized in all countries.

These facts also have implications for the families of migrant workers who receive remittances. In 2019 the remittance industry reached US\$554 billion in transfers to LMICs. However, the impact of COVID-19 is expected to cause the sharpest decline in remittance flows in history, falling by 20 per cent in 2020 to US\$445 billion, as indicated by a recent World Bank forecast.

The Remittances Community Task Force (RCTF)

On 19 March 2020, the [Secretary-General of the United Nations](#) called for an urgent and coordinated response from the international community to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Five days later, the [Remittance Community Task Force \(RCTF\)](#)¹ was launched by co-organizers of the [Global Forum on Remittances, Investment and Development \(GFRID\)](#)² 2020: the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the African Union and the World Bank Group. To date, **39 organizations have joined the RCTF**³, including international organizations, inter-governmental bodies, industry and private sector groups, diaspora networks and international experts on remittances. The RCTF includes a reference group of government representatives and national development agencies.

The main outcome of the RCTF is the **BLUE PRINT FOR ACTION “Remittances in Crisis: Response, Resilience, Recovery”**, which will be released at the end of October 2020, to improve response and support resilience and recovery of the global remittance market. The included concrete measures aim at being directed to government authorities, RSPs and diaspora groups, and to maintain the flow of fast, cheap and safe remittances during and beyond the COVID-19 crisis.

¹ <https://familyremittances.org/idfr-2020/the-remittance-community-task-force/>

² The GFRID is promoted and supported in GCM Objective 20/b as an important platform to build and strengthen partnerships for innovative solutions on cheaper, faster and safer transfers of remittances with all relevant stakeholders

³ The complete list of members can be found on its dedicated website

The work, inputs and recommendations of the RCTF are already currently contributing to several global processes, and in particular have served as basis for, and directly contributed to the [menu for policy options](#) of the [Financing for Development in the era of covid-19 and beyond](#).⁴

The International Day of Family Remittances – “Building Resilience in times of crisis” Global Campaign 2020

The International Day of Family Remittances⁵ – [“Building Resilience in times of crisis” Global Campaign 2020](#) was designed to promote concrete actions in support of remittance families while at the same time recognise the key role they play on the wellbeing of millions of families and on the sustainable development of their local communities. Taking stock of the many virtuous initiatives of public institutions and private companies addressing the COVID-19 crisis in relation to remittances, the campaign has offered a dedicated website and social media visibility through the hashtag *#familyremittances* to highlight best practices.

The concrete actions taken by the private and public sectors to support remittance families culminated on 16 June’s observance activities are collected on its dedicated website, and were brought to the attention to the IDFR network of over 12,000 stakeholders and to a wider public on social media. More than 700 people connected to the [IDFR 2020 Observance Event](#) on June 16.

⁴ On 28 May 2020, Canada, Jamaica and the UN Secretary-General convened a High-Level Event to join forces with Heads of State and Government, international organizations, and other key partners to enable discussions of concrete financing solutions to the COVID-19 health and development emergency for everyone. In follow up to the High-Level Event on May 28th, six Discussions Groups were convened to address questions of external finance and remittances, jobs and inclusive growth; recovering better for sustainability; global liquidity and financial stability; debt vulnerability; private sector creditors engagement; and illicit financial flows.

⁵ Objective 20/b of the GCM calls for promotion and support of the United Nations International Day of Family Remittances, as an important platform to build and strengthen partnerships for innovative solutions on cheaper, faster and safer transfers of remittances with all relevant stakeholders.