

Centring equality in the implementation of the GCM

Date and time: Friday 20th May, 08.30-09.30 EDT

Notetakers: Heaven Crawley, Karl Landström

Key points from the side-event	Member State/UN/Stakeholder
<p>This side-event highlighted the relationships between migration and intersectional inequalities in different geographical contexts. There was a particular focus on inequalities in access to migration pathways, access to rights and social protection, and access to digital platforms for remittance transfers. Panelists emphasized the importance of understanding migration as part of wider economic, social and political processes. In order to center equality in the implementation of the GCM, Member States need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address underlying structural economic and political inequalities at the global/international level which destabilize countries and drive migration; - Ensure that human rights are central to migration policy and practice because these can act as an important lever for reducing inequalities associated with migration; - Listen to the voices of migrants because statistics conceal a wide range of inequalities, and rarely capture the complex relationships and processes associated with migration; - Join up policy areas: implementation of the GCM is not just about migration. 	<p>UNU-CPR Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) INURED Haiti OECD Development Centre</p>
<h3>Summary</h3>	
<p>Introduction</p> <p>This was a hybrid side-event, with 102 registered to attend: 38 attended online and 10 in-person, including 4 panelists. There were 4 interventions. The side-event focused on the following objectives:</p> <p>OBJECTIVE 1: Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies</p> <p>The side-event provided participants with an opportunity to learn more about the substantial new body of qualitative and quantitative data generated by the MIDEQ Hub (www.mideq.org)</p> <p>OBJECTIVE 7: Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration</p> <p>Speakers drew attention to the inequalities associated with migration, including in relation to the right to move, access to justice and access to economic and social processes that can contribute to the development process, including in relation to remittance transfers.</p>	



OBJECTIVE 17: Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration

Speakers highlighted the ways in which dominant representations can exacerbate the inequalities experienced by migrants, for example, by legitimating policy responses which undermine their access to rights and social protection and contributing to racism and xenophobia which leads to social and economic exclusion, and vulnerability.

Panel discussion

In her introductory remarks, **Professor Heaven Crawley (UNU-CPR)** explained the reasons behind the focus on issues of equality. There are huge inequalities in the world which is becoming increasingly unequal, not only in terms of income and wealth but also in terms of structural inequalities associated race and gender, sexuality and age, religion, language and culture. Many of these inequalities have been deepened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on the work of the [MIDEQ Hub](#), Professor Crawley provided an overview of the relationships between inequality. Inequalities can exacerbate existing inequalities and create new ones, especially in relation to the right to move. But migration also has potential to reduce inequalities and can play a key role in delivery of the SDGs. Whether or not this potential is realized depends, in large part, on the policies that are put in place, not just in relation to migration but across a wide range of other policy areas, some of which are clearly related and others seemingly not.

Professor Louis Herns Marcelin (INURED) emphasized the intersection of global and local inequalities in shaping migration experiences and outcomes in the context of Haiti. Professor Marcelin was critical of the international community's focus on 'safe, orderly and regular migration' given that some Member States have actively contributed to the destabilization of countries such as Haiti. He argued that Member States should not just focus on migration but also wider issues of governance, security and justice in countries like Haiti, where increasing marginalization and multiple crises have set the stage for migration trails with unique patterns and migrant experiences. Further, it is important to engage migrant voices and perspectives, rather than data alone, which can help us to understand the intersections of inequality with migration in these contexts.

Drawing on evidence from the work of UN Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific region, **Dr Pia Oberoi (OHCHR)** focused her intervention on the importance of bringing human rights fully into the implementation of the GCM: human rights, she argued, are at the heart of equality, with inequalities in access in rights leading to further migration-related inequalities. Dr Oberoi emphasized the complementarity of humanitarian and labor-based approaches: in some countries human rights, humanitarian and other non-labor pathways enable migrants to regularize their status and secure access to rights. Her recommendations included: centring human rights in migration policy and practice; providing alternatives to return; and bridging the implementation gaps so that migration opportunities are accessible and inclusive in practice.

Dr Jason Gagnon (OECD) suggested that there are three main areas in which inequalities and migration intersect: inequalities in integration/inclusion; inequalities in access to migration; and inequalities in access to remittances. In relation to the first of these intersections, Dr Gagnon highlighted the importance of access to social protection, particularly for migrant youth. He highlighted inequalities in access to the right to move, reinforcing the points made by the previous speakers. And he drew attention to the digital divide, noting that inequalities in access to online platforms for remittance transfers might deepen existing inequalities. In his concluding remarks, Dr Gagnon emphasized the importance of policy responses to address inequality beyond the migration sphere.



Interventions from the floor

- Interventions highlighted the ways in which inequalities shape migration experiences and outcomes, for example, the experiences of LGBTI+ migrants who are also subjected to discrimination and marginalization as a result of their sexuality/gender identity.
- Participants and panelists emphasized the importance of engaging with the experiences of migrants themselves. Data is important but not sufficient (Objective 1).
- UN agencies and Member States need to move away from a 'bird's eye' view towards an understanding that comes from 'the bottom up' and engages with the contexts in which migration is taking place.
- The topic of negative migration narratives was discussed (Objective 17), including the ways in which these narratives limit the political and policy space to secure rights for migrants, and often pit vulnerable groups against one another.
- Panelists highlight the existence of policy tools to reduce inequalities. Member States need to bring these to bear on the migration space.
- Joining up different policy agendas at the national level is a key priority for ensuring equality is centred in the implementation of the GCM.