

CONCEPT NOTE | IMRF SIDE EVENT

ENHANCING THE CONTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS IN THE POST COVID-19 ERA

Tuesday, 17 May 2022

1:15 – 2:30 PM (EDT) | 7:15 – 8:30 PM (CET)
ZOOM

Organizers: IFAD, UN DESA, World Bank

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is one of the ten cross-cutting and guiding principles of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The Global Compact is grounded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

The contribution of migrants to the development of their countries of origin, through remittances, diaspora investments and trade, far exceeds official development assistance and foreign direct investment. The contribution of migrants to economies and societies of destination are similarly essential, as the recent COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated.

This webinar assesses progress made in implementing Objective 19 (Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries) and Objective 20 (Promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants) of the Global Compact. The webinar will also contribute to strengthening the global evidence base on international migration and how this may support an informed policy debate (Objective 1). Furthermore, it aims to identify how the transnational engagement of migrants can be further strengthened to maximize their vast potential. The webinar will pay specific attention to how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected these contributions and what actions can be taken to leverage their contributions as countries are building back from the crisis.

Good practices and recommendations identified by the webinar will inform the first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), to be held in May 2022, when the status of implementation of the Global Compact will be assessed and, in particular, Roundtable 3, which will review, inter alia, objectives 19 and 20. The seminar will also inform the negotiations on the Progress Declaration, which will be adopted during the Forum.

OBJECTIVE

This side event will focus explicitly on the contribution of migrants and migration to sustainable development.¹

It will provide Member States and other stakeholders with concrete suggestions on how to promote implementation of objectives 19 and 20 of the Global Compact as well to build on the *Menu of Options for the Considerations of Heads of State and Government* in the recent *Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond* process.²

¹ https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1416/files/resources_files/imrf_roadmap_calendar_-_2021-2022.pdf

² https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/financing_for_development_covid19_part_ii_hosg.pdf

BACKGROUND

Despite the onset of the COVID19 pandemic, international remittance volumes held firm throughout 2020, recording only a modest 1.6 per cent decline to US\$549 billion, in the face of one of the deepest recorded global recessions, and increased again in 2021 to US\$589 billion, registering a 7.3 per cent increase.

This was possible thanks to the resilience of hundreds of millions of migrants who continued to send money to their families and communities back home, regardless of the economic challenges they were facing in their host countries. Remittances are critically important for developing countries, in particular for rural and more vulnerable communities, particularly in times of crisis. Almost half of all remittance flows go to rural areas, accounting for over US\$200 billion annually.

The pandemic, while creating major challenges, has also created new opportunities for the global remittance market. Migrants increased their use of regulated and digital channels in many corridors. Increased use of digital channels in many cases brought down the costs of transferring remittances. Private sector operators adapted their business models and policy makers provided the necessary enabling environment.

The webinar will also briefly discuss the impact on remittances of policies and measures to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism. Lastly, the webinar will consider the potential for concessional financing facilities for migrants.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA EDT | CET

1:15 | 7:15

OPENING REMARKS

Jyotsna Puri, Associate Vice-President, Strategy and Knowledge Department, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (5 minutes)

1:20 | 7:20

PANEL DISCUSSION

MODERATOR:

Pedro De Vasconcelos, Manager, Financing Facility for Remittances (FFR), IFAD

PRESENTATIONS BY THE PANELLISTS (5 minutes each):

Central Bank of Uganda representative (name tbc)

Gibril Faal, visiting professor in practice, Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa (FLIA), London School of Economics (LSE), co-founder of GK Partners and RemitAid

Leon Isaacs, Chief Executive Officer, Developing Markets Associates Global (DMAG)

Sonia Plaza, Senior Economist, Finance, Competitiveness and Innovation Global Practice, World Bank

Stefanie Scharf, Head of Division, Policy Issues of Displacement and Migration, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Q&A

1:50 | 7:50

INTERVENTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

(Member States and stakeholders) (30 minutes)

2:20 | 8:20

RESPONSES BY THE PANELLISTS

(1 minute each)

2:25 | 8:25

CLOSING REMARKS

Francesca Spatolisano, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) (5 minutes)



INDICATIVE GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE PANELISTS

Too often, the public debate in countries of destination focuses on the short-term challenges of migrant integration without taking into account the longer term, positive contribution of migrants. What is the current state of affairs of the evidence on the role of migrants and migration in the economies of host countries? How can this evidence be better integrated in narratives on migrants and migration?

What is the role of the private sector in contributing to the further implementation of objectives 19 and 20 of the Global Compact? How can the private sector support Member States in implementing the recommendations of the *Menu of Options for the Considerations of Heads of State and Government* in the recent *Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond* process?

Digitalization has received a strong boost as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. What are the ramifications of the digitalization process for remittance markets and for costs of transferring remittances? What is the impact of increased digitalization of remittance markets on inequalities within and between countries?

How can the development community support actions in favour of objectives 19 and 20 of the Global Compact? What were the implications of the COVID-19 crisis for implementing these objectives?

What interactions are needed between public and private sector stakeholders to support remittance senders and recipients?

What are some of the priorities in improving the flow and reducing the costs of remittances to Africa? How can the impact of remittances to Africa be strengthened? Beyond remittances, how are diasporas from Africa and elsewhere supporting their communities of origin in light of the setbacks generated by the COVID-19 crisis?

ORGANIZERS



[International Fund for Agricultural Development \(IFAD\)](#)



[Financing Facility for Remittances \(FFR\)](#)



[UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs \(UN DESA\)](#)



[THE WORLD BANK
World Bank](#)



[KNOMAD
KNOMAD](#)

PRACTICAL ASPECTS

The webinar will take place within the framework of the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF). For further information, please contact a.casano@ifad.org, hovy@un.org and splaza@worldbank.org.



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SPEAKERS' BIOS



Jyotsna Puri
Associate Vice-President, Strategy and Knowledge Department
(SKD), IFAD

[LinkedIn](#)

Jyotsna Puri (or Jo) is the Associate Vice-President - Strategy and Knowledge Department (SKD) at IFAD. She leads the organizations strategy work in IFAD's key areas targeting agriculture, climate, gender, nutrition, youth and social inclusion. Puri provides the vision for evidence-informed advice on program designs and implementation, contributing to resource mobilization, and supporting IFAD's global remit in providing state-of-the-art policy advice related to these topics.

Puri has worked previously at the Green Climate Fund, 3ie, UNEP, the World Bank and UNDP. She is also adjunct associate professor at Columbia University, New York where she was also a research scientist. She has published in many academic journals and written for newspapers and provided advice as a board member to several development organizations. In 2019, Puri was selected one of 16 women who have shown leadership in restoring the earth through their efforts, by the Global Landscape Forum.

She holds a PhD and MSc in Agriculture and Resource Economics and an MA in Development Economics.



Pedro De Vasconcelos
Manager, Financing Facility for Remittances (FFR), IFAD

[LinkedIn](#)

Pedro de Vasconcelos joined IFAD in 2007 as Programme Manager of the multi-donor Financing Facility for Remittances (FFR) and is IFAD's Senior Technical Specialist and FFR Coordinator. The US\$62 million Facility, under his leadership, has tested and scaled innovative approaches on migration and economic development by maximizing the impact of remittances and migrant investment on development.

He is an internationally recognized expert in his field and contributes actively to national, regional and global policy agendas (G7/20, GFMD, and IFAD's Global Forums on Remittances, Investment and Development, among others) placing remittances, migration, financial inclusion on the global agendas of major development institutions and governments. He is also the lead author of the biannual IFAD flagship publication Sending Money Home and originator and coordinator of IFAD's International Day of Family Remittances (IDFR).

De Vasconcelos' areas of expertise range from financial inclusion for development (remittances, payments systems, investments), migration and entrepreneurship, SME development and finance.

Before joining the Fund, De Vasconcelos designed, launched and managed the Inter-American Development Bank's Multilateral Investment Fund's (FOMIN) strategy and programme on remittances and migrant investment. He also launched and coordinated FOMIN's ICT for development programme. From 1998 to 2000, De Vasconcelos served at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva.

De Vasconcelos holds a Bachelor's Degree in International Business from the University of Toulouse-France and a Master's Degree in International Business and Management from the University of Paris IV, La Sorbonne.

He represents IFAD at the G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI), the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and the United Nations' Global Migration Group (GMG).



Gibril Faal
Visiting professor in practice, Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa (FLIA), London School of Economics (LSE), co-founder of GK Partners and RemitAid

[LinkedIn](#)

Professor Gibril Faal is a multi-disciplinary business and development executive. He is the co-founder and director of GK Partners specialising in socially responsible business models, sustainable development and programme implementation. He is the first visiting professor in practice at the Institute of Global Affairs, London School of Economics (LSE) and is a council member of Carnegie African Diaspora Program (New York). Gibril has previously served as: vice chair of Bond (UK), chairman of AFFORD-UK, founding director of ADEPT (Brussels), and magistrate in Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service. He has worked as a technical expert with the United Nations, World Bank, University of Oxford, governments of Germany, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, and other institutions across the world. He served as GFMD civil society co-chair (2014) and grand rapporteur (2017), and overarching expert for the Global Compact for Migration. He has addressed the UN General Assembly several times and been appointed to various boards by UK government ministers. Gibril has previously served as special adviser to the government of Moldova, and is the founder and director of the Migration and Sustainable Development in The Gambia (MSDG) project. In 2014, Gibril was appointed OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to international development.



Leon Isaacs
Founder and Chief Executive Officer – DMA Global

[LinkedIn](#)

Leon is Founder and Chief Executive Officer of DMA Global, the specialist international development company that he founded in 2007. He is a seasoned expert and business leader in the payments and international development fields with a particular expertise in migrant remittances. He has over 30 years hands-on experience.

Leon was Managing Director of the International Association of Money Transfer Networks, where he interacted with numerous regulators and stakeholders to represent the industry. He was a member of the UK Government's Remittances Task Force, between 2005 and 2010. He is an observer to the G20 Consultative Committee of the Private-Public Sector Partnership on Remittances. Leon has spoken at, and chaired, numerous international conferences on remittances including at the World Bank, the United Nations and the G8.

Prior to establishing DMAG he was intrinsically involved with two successful start-up remittance businesses.

Leon is an economist by training and is currently based in France.



Sonia Plaza
Senior Economist, Finance, Competitiveness and Innovation Global Practice, World Bank

[LinkedIn](#)

Sonia Plaza is a Senior Economist in the Finance, Competitiveness and Innovation Global Practice of the World Bank. She is also the co-chair of the Diaspora Thematic working group of KNOMAD (Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development). Sonia was born in Lima, Peru. Her father had a constructing firm, so some of her earliest childhood memories are of traveling with him to poor areas including Ayacucho where

he was working on projects. This is how she was first exposed to development work, and it shaped her. She wrote chapter 5 of the book, “Africa’s Silk Road: China and India’s New Economic Frontier”, which covers trade facilitation, technology, and skills transfer, and regional trade agreements. She advises many universities on the transfer of skills and tapping into their diasporas. Sonia attended the University of Lima and earned a degree in Economics, after which she joined Chase Manhattan Bank, and was then invited to join the Peruvian Ministry of Trade as a manager responsible for counter trade and debt swap agreements. She also has a dual degree from Yale University and the University of Pennsylvania in International Economics and Development. She was Professor of Economics (International Economics) at the Peruvian School of Foreign Service and at the University of Lima in Peru, and was adjunct faculty (Microeconomics and Macroeconomics) at The American University in Washington, DC. Her research interests include international migration, labor mobility, trade, and the future of labor. She joined the Institute for the Study of Labor as a Research Fellow in February 2010.



Stefanie Scharf
Head of Division, Policy Issues of Displacement and Migration,
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
(BMZ)

Stefanie Scharf is head of the division for policy issues of displacement and migration at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Since 2007 she worked at various positions within the Ministry, recently as deputy head of the Middle East division.

Her positions abroad include Lebanon and Yemen. As head of development cooperation at the German embassies in Beirut and Sanaa she gained extensive experience with fragility, conflict and protracted refugee situations. In addition she worked at the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations in New York.

Stefanie Scharf studied political science (Diplom) at Freie Universität in Berlin and at Wrocław University in Poland.



Maria-Francesca Spatolisano
Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination
and Inter-Agency Affairs and Acting Secretary-
General's Envoy on Technology
Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

[LinkedIn](#)

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced on 20 December 2018 the appointment of Maria-Francesca Spatolisano of Italy as Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. She will succeed Thomas Gass of Switzerland, to whom the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs are grateful for his commitment and dedicated service to the Organization.

Ms. Spatolisano has 33 years of experience in public service including extensive senior leadership in multilateral affairs. She has served as the European Union Ambassador to the OECD and UNESCO, Monaco and Andorra. She was a member of the EU Delegation to the United Nations, serving as the Head of its Economic and Trade Section. She covered all issues related to trade, development and environmental policies in the Second Committee and ECOSOC and was also the EC representative to the Fifth Committee.

Since 2017, she has been responsible for International Organizations and Development Dialogue with other Donors in the Commission’s Directorate General for Development Cooperation. In this capacity, she has assured the EU presence and developed EU positions on development policy in a number of international fora including the United Nations, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, OECD, G-7 and the G-20, where she represented the EU in the G-20 Development Working Group.

Ms. Spatolisano holds a Doctorate in Law (cum laude) from Florence University and is fluent in Italian, English and French. She is married with two children.