**First session of the International Dialogue on Migration 2021 I accelerating integrated action on sustainable development: migration, the environment and climate change**

**Panel 5: Promoting and supporting regional, national and local action on migration, environment and climate change**

challenges and gaps linked to migration, environment, and climate change

focus on regional, national and local action

examples of practices adopted by states, IOM and other stakeholders on migration, environment, and climate change, at regional, national and sub-national levels

lessons learned to amplify the work currently in action

sustainability and climate focused actions in cities globally as well as urbanization in the context of climate change

how regional, national and local action and shared practices can be leveraged with migration to achieve the sustainable development goals.

**STATEMENT Katja Schaefer, UN-Habitat**

**Introduction**

* Pleasure to be in this panel and in fact, to be the very last speaker of this three day event of the International Dialogue on Migration 2021.
* It is a challenging task but I will try to provide a positive and foreword looking perspective on the topic - promoting and supporting regional, national and local action on migration, environment and climate change.
* As an inter-regional Advisor, I am wearing quite a few hats within UN-Habitat which allow me to work in an integrated matter in support of addressing urbanization challenges in our member states as well as support local authorities who are at the “frontline of facing and addressing development challenges”.
* Living in the world today, we are very much acknowledging that urbanization processes are the challenge of our time (as the sustainability will stand or fall in urban areas – as the previous SG stated), and so it is the migration, environment and climate change dimension that is a global phenomenon that the world has to jointly manage (as much as the current covid19 pandemic).

**Migration and Inclusive Cities**

* The world is rapidly urbanising and migration, triggered by many different causes, is among the main drivers of this continuing trend. More than a billion people are migrants, and almost 258 million live outside their own countries. Cities are the main destination for migrants, with 60 per cent of the 14.4 million refugees worldwide and 80 per cent of the 38 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in urban areas.
* Migration policies are often developed at national level, yet cities and human settlements carry much of the responsibility to ensure the inclusion of migrants, their access to housing and urban services (administrative, social and basic services) and for fostering social cohesion between communities.
* While, in many cases, migrants contribute positively to the social and economic development and cultural diversity of their hosting communities, many cities struggle with social cohesion and integrating the newly arrivals in their urban systems, particularly when resources and human, institutional and financial capacity are limited.
* Reduced inequality, safe, orderly and regular migration and sustainable urbanisation are important goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and achieving these interlinked goals require national and local authorities to coordinate their efforts to reduce the causes of migration and ensure migrants can live with dignity in their communities.
* Recognising the significant proportion of migrants in cities, the New Urban Agenda calls on Member States to “support local authorities in establishing frameworks that enable the positive contribution of migrants to cities,” (para 28).
* The Global Compacts for Migration (GCM) and on Refugees (GCR) further reinforce the role of local authorities as key players for their implementation.
* Cities need support to harness the local economic, cultural, and social opportunities that urban population growth can bring to cities. Sustainable urban solutions need vertical and horizontal cooperation amongst all relevant stakeholders and inclusive decision-making processes.
* As the New Urban Agenda recognises the full potential of well-managed urbanisation to prevent, prepare for, and better respond to urban crises, UN-Habitat offers integrated approaches in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, supporting urban recovery, increasing housing, land and property rights and reducing spatial inequalities in cities.
* UN-Habitat contributes to relevant UN networks and is well placed to convene different levels of governments, built environment professionals and the research community, civil society, private sector, humanitarian and development actors for advancing multi-stakeholder cooperation in urban areas.
* With its strong understanding of urban systems and building up on the agency's global experiences in normative and operational urban programmes, UN-Habitat supports cities to develop innovative and tailored solutions for making cities liveable places for all.
* Migration to cities, when effectively managed, has proven to contribute positively to the socio-economic dynamism and sustainable development of cities. Inclusive planning and management of cities can facilitate positive contributions of migrant communities for the economic, social and cultural development of cities, and ensure that needs of all inhabitants, independent of their migration status, are met.
* UN-Habitat aims to bring together national and local governments, UN agencies and regional commissions, academia, civil society organisations and private sector for the development of inclusive, integrated and multi-sectoral urban solutions. Based on its mandate, the agency advocates for whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, and emphasizes the need for strengthening the human rights of all inhabitants for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and implementing the New Urban Agenda.
* By enhancing capacity at all government levels, data collection and knowledge sharing, UN-Habitat supports cities throughout the humanitarian-development-peace nexus for developing urban frameworks that make cities inclusive, resilient and safe.
* Migration policies are often developed at national level but implemented locally. By adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda and recent Global Compacts for Migration and on Refugees, UN Member States have acknowledged the role of local authorities in ensuring inclusivity in line with the UN principle of leaving no-one behind. All of them have a strong human-centered focus. And the New Urban Agenda outlines the pathway to localizing the global commitments at the level of cities and communities.
* UN-Habitat supports cities facing challenges due to different types of migration flows, including rural-urban migration; voluntary migration and forced displacement; migration due to conflict, natural hazards and climate change, or due to social and economic reasons. People move to cities, within their countries, within their region and across international boundaries.
* UN-Habitat’s vision is to achieve “a better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world”, and contribute to leave no one behind. We work with partners to build inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and communities. We promote urbanization as a positive transformative force for people and communities, reducing inequality, discrimination, and poverty.
* In our Strategic Plan 2020-23, UN-Habitat has outlined in four domains of change the importance of (1) reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum, (2) enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions, (3) strengthened climate action and improved urban environment, and (4) effective crisis prevention and response. Specifically, domain of change 4 focuses on inclusive and resilient cities, promoting social cohesion, underlining the positive impact of urban migration. UN-Habitat aims at for reducing inequalities and advancing sustainable urbanization for all inhabitants.
* Migration and displacement concerns are mainstreamed across our work which technically supports member states in building on a 5prong approach: (1) National Urban Policy; (2) Urban and territorial Planning and Design; (3) Urban Legislation and governance; (4) Municipal finance and urban economy; (5) local implementation.

**UN-Habitat supports countries and cities through**

* Research on urbanisation and migration, fostering collaboration between local and international research institutes and academia;
* Enhancing capacity of national and local authorities on inclusive cities, including peer-to-peer (city-to-city) learning activities;
* Supporting inclusive policy development that mainstreams the issue of urban migration at national, cities, community levels;
* Providing advisory services to review and adapt national, subnational and local urban policies, strategies and action plans related to service provision, social cohesion and integration, housing, land and property rights for all population groups;
* Facilitating dialogue between relevant stakeholders e.g. national, regional and local authorities, and from different sectors – local communities, private sector and civil society for advancing migrant inclusive urban systems;
* Supporting cities and regions with an integrated territorial approach to harness opportunities and foster urban-rural linkages;
* Engaging with diaspora communities for the integration of new arrivals as well as on strategies for investments (e.g. remittances);
* Developing sustainable strategies for returnee re-integration in cities.
* Even though solutions are tailored for specific local contexts, the methodologies can be applied in other countries and regions. The projects introduce spatial data collection, capacity building activities for national and local authorities, urban and territorial planning for inclusive cities, neighborhood upgrading as well as urban planning for sustainable solutions in refugee camps, and enhanced governance solutions.
* UN-Habitat’s project work showcase how the needs of all people, irrespective of their migration status, can benefit from inclusive (urban) solutions, that are designed to increase the social cohesion of host and migrant communities and foster sustainable.

**QUESTIONS:**

**What are good practices in engaging regional, national and local stakeholders and strengthening capacities, including gender sensitive approaches?**

* Opportunities that digitalization provides for migrants in engaging both with communities of origin and destination; addressing the digital divide will also address the gender gap in leaving no one behind. Innovation and creative solutions need to be found.

**What are remaining challenges facing the most vulnerable to climate change that require local/regional/international action?**

* *Issue of spatial inequality* that has been highlighted in relation to inclusive urbanisation and the need for building more resilient communities. Migrants often are drawn to move to urban areas where they hope to benefit from opportunities these offer; however, they often have to settle in housing solutions that allow for their temporary status and are affordable to their available resources, often in overcrowded housing situations and in informal areas or far away from urban areas. Lack of access to basic urban services, transport, job opportunities marginalize them further and force them to prioritize their choices, often to the disadvantage of environmental concerns. Locations are remote, in flood prone areas, without linkage to sewage or solid waste management schemes….
* *Issue of awareness and institutional capacities of local governments to understand and address challenges of most vulnerable*
* *Data and evidence for policy on migration and displacement.* *Migration policies made at national level,* often without knowing the actual number of migrants in the urban areas to address their challenges (i.e. urban profiling in Lebanon – urban strategy including migrants and refugees alike, then neighbourhood profiling and neighbourhood upgrading; focus on public spaces as interfaces; introduction of nature-based solutions, etc.);
* *Cross-sectoral coordination at the national level to address complex issues.*
* *Risk-aware development from national to sub national levels.*
* *Enhance Legal and Regulatory Frameworks to integrate migration discourse and displacement into urban policies*
* *Financial streams from central level and limited decentralisation efforts to generate own resources; forecast-based financing and early action on displacement*
* *Acknowledging local solutions as good practices for upscaling*
* *Peer-to-peer exchange*

**How can local, national and regional action be leveraged in GCM implementation in relation to migration, the environment, and climate change?**

* *Climate adaptation and urbanisation in the Caspian Sea Region:* a joint initiative between UN-Habitat, UN Environment, IOM with local (piloting) implementation in selected vulnerable sites in Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, national upscaling and regional exchange on lessons learnt (Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Russian Federation); strengthening of institutional mechanisms and capacity development for evidence-based policy making and implementation; imple

**What are the advantages of local and regional actions in addressing climate and environmental challenges in promoting safe, orderly, and regular migration?**

* *Example climate induced displacement – Morocco: with migrants from various locations in Western Africa passing through Morocco heading north towards Western Europe*  
  1. Many are finding shelter in unplanned and slum like settlements and further contributing to environmental degradation; discussion on skills development in the environmental and climate adaptation arena while also upgrading haphazard living conditions. Role of local governments is vital in steering such processes and addressing sustainable urbanisation challenges for both migrant as well as host communities;   
  2. engagement of Moroccan diaspora communities from the Be-Ne-Lux countries to engage in good environmental practices in their destination countries as well as in their areas of origin, i.e. solid waste management.