The Post- 2015 Development Agenda, Migration & the Philippines

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Introduction

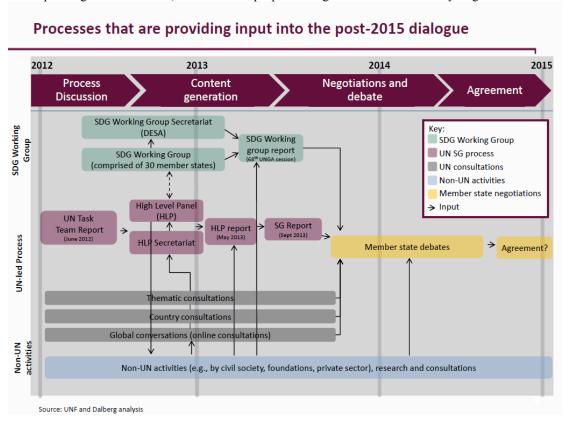
This is an important year in international development. The Millennium Development Goals formally expire, and the UN General Assembly (UNGA) will announce the Sustainable Development Goals to replace them this September, thus setting the international development agenda for the next 15 years.

What are the Sustainable Development Goals?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 goals set by the UN that are designed to combat the world's most pressing issues. Through the goals, the UN intends to end poverty and hunger, combat inequalities, protect the planet, and encourage sustainable economic growth & prosperity. Inclusivity is a key principle behind the goals, and the UN has pledged that 'nobody will be left behind'.

How were they established?

In January 2013, the UNGA set up a 30-member Open Working Group (OWG) to draft a set of development goals. Since then, the OWG has proposed 17 goals and 169 subsidiary targets.



The diagram above illustrates the three phases of SDG formulation – process discussion, content generation and negotiations & debate – that came to a close in 2014. The UN-led input activities formed a strongly participatory process that weaved member state inputs with online consultations and intergovernmental negotiations on various themes including Means of Implementation, Gender, Peace, and Climate Change. Non-UN input activities consisted of a mix of civil society consultations and private sector inputs. These have ranged from thematic to regional activities across the world. Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) has been leading CSO efforts related to the SDGs in Asia, and has held national and regional consultations on the goals across East and Southeast Asia.

A final UNGA summit to formally adopt the post 2015 development agenda will take place on 25-27th September 2015. The process to formulate accompanying indicators for the SDG goals and targets is ongoing, and will come to a close by March 2016.

What are the Sustainable Development Goals?

These are the 17 draft SDGs as put forward by the OWG:

- 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- 2. End hunger, achieve food security & improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
- 3. Ensure healthy lives & promote well-being for all at all ages
- 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education & promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- 5. Achieve gender equality & empower all women and girls
- 6. Ensure availability & sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
- 8. Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all
- 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation, productive employment, and decent work for all
- 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
- 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable
- 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development
- 15. Protect, restore, promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, & halt/reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss sustainable agriculture
- 16. Promote peaceful & inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels
- 17. Strengthen the means of implementation & revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

How are the SDGs different to the MDGs?

These are some of the key ways in which the SDGs differ from the MDGs:

Comprehensiveness

■ The SDGs and targets cover much more ground than the MDGs did. Instead of just addressing traditional poverty reduction areas, the SDGs target issues that lie at the root of poverty, such as peace, stability, and good governance

Universality

• The SDGs are aimed at both developing and developed countries, while the MDGs were aimed solely at developing countries. The SDGs recognise that the issues addressed are global in nature, and thus that the responsibility of solving them is shared between states at all stages of development

• Inclusivity

• The SDGs arose from a global conversation involving a range of stakeholders, while development experts mostly formulated the MDGs. As mentioned above, the SDG formulation process was very participatory in nature

New Actors & Partnerships

 The SDGs pave the way for more actors to be part of global development solutions, and in a variety of new partnerships. Partnering more with the private sector and civil society are key principles embedded in the SDGs

• Climate Change

10 of the 17 draft SDGs mention climate change in their targets, while none of the MDGs did. The inclusion of climate change in the SDGs represents a key step forward, as it recognises climate change as a complex challenge linked to other development issues

• Migration

 The draft SDGs make several explicit mentions of migration and migrant rights, while the MDGs did not. As explored in this paper, this presents an opportunity to support the rights of migrants around the world and to re-examine the role of migrants in development

SDGs and Migration

The SDGs mention migration in a number of ways, including in the areas of migrant rights, remittances, safe migration, trafficking, decent work and data collection. For a full list of migration provisions in the SDGs see Appendix 1.

This symbolises significant progress – both for migrants themselves, through greater protection of their rights, and for the migration & development agenda, as more of the links between these areas are globally recognised. It also paves the way for more effective international migration policies to be formulated that will benefit countries of origin, transit and destination.

SDGs, Migration & the Philippines

The Philippines stands to gain a lot from effective inclusion of migration in the post 2015 international development agenda. The SDG targets cover many of the Philippines' primary interest areas relating to migration on the international stage – for example, promoting the rights of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), enabling more effective and efficient remittances from Overseas Filipinos (OFs), and addressing the recent feminisation of migration.

Though the SDGs are clearly a step in the right direction, there is still more to be done to further the Philippines' interests in the realm of migration. The SDGs, though encouraging, should not mark the end of the Philippines' migration advocacy on the international stage. Through a series of interviews with government agencies including NEDA (National Economic Development Authority), the DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs) (OUMWA – Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Worker Affairs and UNIO – United Nations and Other International Organizations), and CFO (Commission on Filipinos Overseas), the following were identified as key migration issues that are important for the Philippines to pursue on the international stage:

1. Advocating for better data collection

Improving data collection on migratory status is included as a provision in the SDGs, however, efforts involving migration data should go further than this. Data should drive all dialogue and policy on migration and development, and this requires international collaboration that the Philippines can help drive.

There are significant gaps in Philippine migration data collection. Government agencies fail to collect several variables relevant to migration within its migrant data – for example marital status and education level – that limits data disaggregation which could provide useful policy insights. There are also data gaps in certain areas of migration – for example return and irregular migration. The Philippines has started to improve its migration data collection efforts in recent years (for example through the establishment of the Philippine Statistical Authority).

This positions the Philippines well to help improve migration data collection on a global scale. While making these domestic steps, it should push for the international community to improve its migration data collection, reporting and usage. It is only if all countries collect and report meaningful and internationally comparable data on migration that sensitive and effective international migration policies can be designed.

2. Pursuing legal frameworks for migrants

The Philippines should advocate for more international legal frameworks that protect and empower migrants. These may include international frameworks, such as the Domestic Workers Convention 189 of the ILO (International Labor Organization), or regional frameworks, such as an ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) instrument to protect and promote the rights of migrant workers². They can also be bilaterals, such as the labor and social security agreements the Philippines has with many countries already.

The Philippines should advocate for the widespread adoption of existing legal frameworks, and help drive international implementation and monitoring efforts for these. It should also help create new frameworks, by driving dialogue on migration issues where these are lacking (for example, portability of social protection for migrants).

3. Helping improve international cooperation on migration

Too often migration policy is set by states unilaterally, and with the perception that it is a zero sum game between countries of migrant origin and destination. There is a clear need to change misperceptions around the effects of international migration so it is not perceived as a negative force and hampers cooperation.

Because the SDGs are aimed at both developing and developed countries, there is scope for the perceived differences between the interests of migrant sending and receiving countries to become a thing of the past, and for true collaboration to emerge. Applying the SDG's principle of universality to migration would mean recognising migration as a global issue that requires all states to take collective responsibility for managing. For the Philippines, closer collaboration with destination countries could prove very fruitful on a range of issues, including diaspora engagement.

Therefore, the Philippines must encourage positive international dialogue on migration that can help diverse countries recognise common objectives and start cooperating on migration. It could do this by initiating dialogue and forging closer relationships and partnerships with a variety of countries on these issues, and supporting the dissemination of facts and statistics about migration around the world.

Migration & Philippine Development

Migration from the Philippines has been increasing steadily for the last 40 years, and has more than doubled in the past 10 years. There are presently over 10.5m Filipinos abroad, whose personal remittances reached US\$ 26.968M in 2014³.

Unfortunately this large-scale emigration has been largely out of necessity, due to the non-inclusive nature of Philippine economic development. The jobless growth of recent decades has seen unemployment and underemployment remain high despite impressive year on year GDP growth, and seeking employment abroad is the solution for thousands every year. At the same time, a degree of Philippine macro-economic dependence on migration has emerged, as remittances represented approximately 10% of GDP, and these have contributed to the valuation of the peso. This has, to a certain extent, dampened the government's impetus to decrease the rate and flow of emigrating Filipinos.

Working abroad should be a choice rather than an economic necessity. Contrary to the status quo, this means migrating to live or work abroad should be a decision Filipino citizens make, where they hold a genuine choice. At present, most overseas Filipinos (OFs) are not choosing to exercise their right to mobility, but are simply leaving to make ends meet.

² The Asean Framework Instrument is still a work in progress; it follows the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers that the Asean Heads of States adopted during the 12th ASEAN Summit in the Philippines

³ Bangko Sentral Ng Pilipinas 2014 http://www.bsp.gov.ph/statistics/keystat/ofw.htm

Clearly migration is not a sustainable development strategy in itself. Aside from the economic linkages mentioned above, migration also brings considerable social costs to OFs and their families, which need to be factored into policy. The government should seek to balance the economic and social costs and benefits of migration for all. This means striking the right balance between generating decent jobs at home, making sure migration is a well-considered and safe possibility for citizens, and promoting the rights and welfare of Filipinos overseas.

NEDA & the PDP

NEDA is already taking serious steps to realise the developmental aspect of migration in the Philippines. The 2011-2016 Philippine Development Plan (PDP), which aims for sustained and inclusive economic growth, includes 64 provisions relating to migration. The Plan addresses several aspects of migration, in areas including remittance management, financial literacy education, social protection overseas, protecting women migrant workers, human trafficking prevention, and more⁴. In several policy areas, the PDP is more advanced than the SDGs in recognising and addressing migration & development linkages.

Though several aspects of migration are included in the PDP, there is more to be done. These are key topics that government representatives from several agencies recommended should be pursued domestically relating to migration.

1. Increasing decent work

Tackling the 'jobless growth' and decreasing un- and under- employment is a key priority. Though this is mentioned in the PDP, it requires a long term, inter-agency strategy that goes beyond NEDA's scope. Investing in economic growth at home that increases decent work for all in the Philippines goes towards making migration a choice rather than a necessity. One way to do this would be to focus on growth in key production sectors, such as manufacturing, that have the potential to generate sustained employment on a large scale.

2. Mobilising around return migration

The Philippines lacks an overarching strategy and framework pertaining to return migration that successfully leverages its benefits. There are programs in place that cater to returnees, but these are relatively underdeveloped when compared to initiatives in other parts of the migration cycle. A government system with coordinated services that facilitates and regulates return migration is needed, and this should be paired with more effective diaspora engagement. Improving data collection on returnees is an important part of this; there is currently no systematic process in place to do this, and better capturing data will allow for better and more targeted reintegration programs to be designed and implemented.

3. Strengthening all levels of government engagement

It is critical that all levels of government are aligned in their vision of migration, and actively engaged in relevant migration programmes. This becomes particularly significant in the context of invigorating reintegration processes, as this will require considerable buy-in and cooperation of Local Government Units (LGUs) around the country. There needs to be a focus on engaging LGUs in designing and implementing projects for return migrants, and giving them more ownership in this area, so that they can help drive these.

4. Improving financial literacy

Given the levels of incoming remittances, the issue of financial literacy is more important than ever. NEDA, CFO and other government agencies already promote many financial literacy initiatives, but these need to be strengthened and expanded to cater for all OF profiles and their families. Improving household financial management and making remittances more effective for families are key steps towards giving OFs

⁴ For a full list of migration provisions in the PDP, visit: http://www.cfo.gov.ph/index.php?option=com_content&view%20=article&id=1491

more agency over their development. Helping to harness remittances for development and/or investment purposes is another area of interest that government, private sector and civil society all have a role to play in developing.

Looking forward

The migration references in the OWG's SDG targets represent significant progress for migrants, and the migration & development agenda. If executed effectively, the embedding of these topics in the global development agenda will:

- Protect and advance the rights and well-being of migrants and their families around the world
- Leverage benefits of migration for origin and destination countries and balance this more effectively with the costs of migration
- Improve the prospects for more effective migration policies around the world, and greater international cooperation on migration
- Help make migrants become drivers in development

The SDGs alone will not successfully realise the development potential of migration in the Philippines. It is crucial that the Philippines also follows the recommendations laid out above. Overall, this is a turning point for migration & development, and an opportunity for the Philippines to advance its migration interests on the national and international level.

Appendix 1

On July 31, 2015, CMA convened a consultation participated in by Civil Society Organizations from the migrant, labor, women, academe, development groups and various government agencies. The SDGs proposed indicators in Appendix 1 were the initial results of this consultation. This is a work in progress.

SDG Goal	SDG Target	Proposed Indicators
Goal 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages	3.8 Achieve universal health coverage (UHC), including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health care services, and access to safe, effective, quality, and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	 Full implementation of Section 5, item 4 of RA 10022 which prohibits compulsory and exclusive arrangement whereby an overseas Filipino worker is required to undergo health examinations only from specifically designated medical clinics, institutions, entities or persons. In the immediate period, to monitor full compliance of GAMCA clinics and related arrangements by other medical clinics catering to migrant health testing; and ensure that there is enough number of accessible and affordable DOH-accredited, compliant with global standards, medical clinics for the medical and

- health testing needs of prospective migrants;
- Intensify information dissemination on the programs of Philhealth for OFWs; facilitate easy access to these programs and services;
- Inclusion and implementation of provisions on migrant health in bilateral labor agreements
- Portability of health insurance
- Establishment of mechanisms for timely repatriation of human remains
- Timely/proper monitoring/transfer of diseased including HIV AIDS infected and deceased OFWs
- Timely/proper monitoring of HIV infected OFWs
- Collection and consolidation of data on the mental health OFWs
- Adoption and implementation of the 3-5 year Phil migrant health plan of the DOH
- Increase national health budget to improve public health services that will address health concerns of OFWs and members of their families

3.c

Increase substantially health financing and the recruitment, development and training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing states

- Create sufficient plantilla positions in the Philippine health system, national and local, to provide decent employment to unemployed health workforce and sufficiently address the health needs of the population
- Review DOH-HEALS to ensure it meets its objectives
- Review existing bilateral agreements on the recruitment

- and deployment of health and medical workers to ensure they do not compromise the health needs of the country
- Regulation of training schools for the health professionals

Goal 4

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.b

By 2030, increase by [x] per cent the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states

- Nation-wide approach matching system and must be beyond pilot schools
- Transnational education accreditation
- Increase in number of destination countries that are involved in TESDA process
- Increase in number of LGUs working in TESDA
- Increase in budget allocation for reskilling, matching, trainings, and other education activities
- An established communitybased information gathering system that is migration sensitive
- Periodic review of SDGs enhance participation of the civil society; Operations of bodies, programs, representatives, institutions Stand on sending OFWs should have a choice not a necessity
- Awareness raising programs, incorporate in the education system; Enhance education programs CHED, DepED; Integrate in Human Rights in CHED courses cater to migration & development and local economy should be taught not only Migration
- Integration Systematic education seminar type 3-5 days may be formal?

		 OFWs "Bagong Bayani" should not be glamorized
		• Recognize that the Philippines is becoming a receiving country
		 Promote and establish policies inside our country that are at par with the migration policies of other countries
Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls		 Increase in number of women availing programs of TESDA and OWWA especially those catered to skills improvement.
	5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	• Expansion of women skillset and job opportunities defined by increased number of women in non-traditional sectors for women (i.e welding, automotives, electrical, green jobs, meteorologists, etc.).
	5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	• Compliance and effective enforcement of relevant laws addressing violence against women and girls (RA9262; Magna Carta of Women, Family Code, RA9208 and amended Law; CEDAW and GR26; RA8042 and amended laws; ILO C29 and P29; RA10361)
		 Sex disaggregated data on cases of violence received by the embassies and government agencies
		Capacity building and rights- based gender sensitive trainings for embassy/consulate/overseas labor officials and other government service officers
	5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and	 Increase in enrollment rate of migrant workers in social security
	domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and	• Ensure effective

social protection policies, and the implementation of Batas promotion of shared responsibility Kasambahay as well as the within the household and the family as bilateral agreements on nationally appropriate migrant domestic workers; create monitors for this purpose For OWWA to develop and implement support programs for migrant families and families left-behind including modules on gender awareness and sensitivity Reduction of contractualization practices Increase in number of reintegrated workers with better and sustainable jobs Enacted Anti-Age Discrimination Bill 8.5 Increase in number of Foreign By 2030 achieve full and productive Direct Investment and employment and decent work for all **Domestic Investment** women and men, including for young Incentives and support for OF people and persons with disabilities, investors and equal pay for work of equal value Support for Research and Development Goal 8 Promote sustained. Number of Regular Jobs in inclusive and sustainable Sustainable Industries economic growth, full and Portability of Social Security productive employment and decent work for all Full implementation of Kasambahay Law Number of bilateral labor agreements forged that seek to 8.8 promote and protect the rights of migrants; ensure effective Protect labor rights and promote safe compliance and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, Increase in number of

particularly women migrants, and those

in precarious employment

Full compliance to core conventions of ILO and UN

Convention 189 on Domestic

ratifications of ILO

Work

		standards
		 Increase in number of reported and resolved cases of illegal recruitment
		• Increase in number of bilateral labor agreements to promote protection of migrant workers; create monitors for such to ensure effective implementation
		 Promotion and strengthening of workers' and labor associations
		Strict enforcement of anti- child labor laws and prosecution of violators
		• Establishment of community- based information gathering system that is migration sensitive
		Periodic review
Goal 10 Reduce inequality within and among countries	10.7	 Awareness raising programs, incorporate in the education system
	Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies	 Freer and unhampered movement and mobility of resources and opportunities
		 Elimination of policies that hamper people's right to mobility and access to overseas opportunities
		 Number of bilateral agreements forged that are aligned with international standards
		• Enact migration policies that are aligned with the UN MWC
	10.c	• Regulation and monitoring of remittance charges
	By 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%	• Reinvigorate the remittance program of the Philippine Postal System (but PhilPost is not privatized??)

Goal 16

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable institutions at all levels

16.2

End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children

- Reduction in number of trafficked victims
- Number of prosecutions in both countries of origin and destination
- Justice system is without borders
- Effective implementation of the ASEAN Convention on TIP
- Increase budget for Philippine missions
- Establishment of migrant support centers
- Development of social integration programs in countries of destination
- Effective dissemination of existing legal and redress mechanisms
- Expanded awareness of existing recourse mechanisms
- Access to complaint and legal address and psychosocial services
- Access to basic social services like health, education, decent housing, legal assistance regardless of status
- Policies for family reunification
- Policies on regularizing undocumented workers that allow them to freely move
- Access to amnesty and assisted documentation process of migrants and their families
- Number of countries that have an open policy in taking in refugees and displaced persons
- Ratification of UN migrant

workers convention

- Number of migrant organizations established and recognized by governments
- Participation of migrant organizations in policymaking and support services
- Number of recruitment and employing agencies/companies with social responsibility programs for foreign migrants and their families
- Ensure that POLO and ambassadors are gender sensitive and knowledgeable on local labor laws and should be responsive to the OFW's plight and grievances
- PDOS/PEOS module → rights module (pre-departure orientation seminar, preemployment orientation seminar for migrants

Goal 17

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

17.16

Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of sustainable development goals in all countries, particularly developing countries

- Key Indicator: Zero noncompliance and zero-tolerance of non-compliance of laws protecting rights and promoting welfare of migrants. Compliance with international instruments and local laws; based on multisectoral reports, migrants feedback, cases, government compliance tests, assessments, audits and participatory audits.
- Number of signatories to international instruments
- Case resolution rate Number of cases filed vs. number of resolved cases
- Speed of resolution
- Mandatory review of new laws with signatories
- Number of bilateral

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agreements on priority migration and development issues (look for suitable goals/targets) 17.17 Percentage of quality services provided to migrants and Encourage and promote effective members of their families public, public-private, and civil society partnerships, building on the experience Number of multi-stakeholder and resourcing strategies of partnerships providing support partnerships and services to migrants ICT penetration and utilization amongst migrants and relevant stakeholders producing reliable, timely, integrated, valid and consistent data. Performance rating against relevant best practice models 17.18 and frameworks By 2020, enhance capacity building Data-gathering protocol support to developing countries, covering the full-cycle of including for LDCs and SIDS, to migration, e.g. pre-departure increase significantly the availability of to post-departure high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, Real-time, comprehensive, race, ethnicity, migratory status, valid, consistent, reliable data disability, geographic location and on migrants (independently other characteristics relevant in national validated) contexts Accessible data useful in informing migration research, policies and migration governance Satisfaction rating on

Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Proposed Indicators, CSO Working Group https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal

migration data by users