



Gender & Migration in the Post-2015 Agenda: Insights from Research in Southern Africa

Belinda Dodson & Riley Dillon

Department of Geography, University of Western Ontario



Outline

- Background – Who are the main actors? What are they saying?
- Situating gender, migration and gender-and-migration in the post-2015 process
- Using insights from our research to critique the post-2015 process and draft SDGs



The Post-2015 Agenda

- UN-coordinated process to shape development priorities for the next 15 years (post-MDGs; Rio+20)
- UN System Task Team, High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General...
- Formation of an Open Working Group (OWG) to guide the process to develop sustainable development goals (SDGs)
- National, global and thematic consultations
- Draft SDGs in final stages of preparation



OWG Thematic Areas

1. Poverty eradication, building shared prosperity and promoting equality
2. Sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition
3. Health and population dynamics
4. Education and life-long learning
5. **Gender equality and women's empowerment**
6. Water and sanitation
7. Energy
8. Economic growth, employment and infrastructure
9. Industrialization and promoting equality among nations
10. Sustainable consumption and production
11. Conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, oceans and seas
12. Ecosystems and biodiversity
13. Means of implementation/Global partnership for sustainable development
14. Peaceful and inclusive societies, rule of law and capable institutions



Draft SDGs

- Goal 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- **Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**
- Goal 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- **Goal 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**
- Goal 9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation



Draft SDGs cont'd

- **Goal 10 Reduce inequality within and among countries**
- Goal 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Goal 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- **Goal 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development**



Post-2015 & Gender

- Systematically incorporated into the process as a thematic area from the start
- Already embedded and mainstreamed in the MDGs
- Established in UN structures and operations
- Strong civil society organizations and alliances

“UN Women calls for a commitment to achieving gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment in the post-2015 development framework and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as robust mainstreaming of gender considerations across all parts of the framework.”



Post-2015 & Migration

- International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Global Migration Group (GMG) are key advocates for the inclusion of migration
- High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (New York, October 2013)
- Global Experts Meeting on Migration in Post-2015 Agenda (Dhaka, April 2014)
- Global Forum on Migration and Development (Stockholm, May 2014)
- GMG Technical Working Level Meeting on Realizing Post-2015 Aspirations for Migrants and Migration (New York, October 2014)
- Also civil society alliances e.g. the Migration and Development Push Group launched by the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)



Stockholm Agenda on Migrant and Migration-Related Goals and Targets

- Originated from discussions of the civil society Migration and Development Push Group

“The Stockholm Agenda advocates for ensuring that all migrants enjoy decent working conditions, social protection, access to education and healthcare; decreasing remittance transfer costs; and reducing risks to migrants on the move. It provides for the full participation of migrants and diaspora as partners in development planning... In addition, the Agenda offers specific migration targets under a stand-alone goal for multi-actor global and national collaboration to ‘enlarge human security and human development benefits of migration’.”

(Center for Migration Studies, June 30, 2014)



Current migration component in draft SDGs: Goal 5

Goal 5 Attain gender equality, empower women and girls everywhere

5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spaces and end their **trafficking** and sexual exploitation



Current migration component in draft SDGs: Goal 8

Goal 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments of all workers, including **migrant workers**, particularly **women migrants**, and those in precarious employment



Current migration component in draft SDGs: Goal 10

Goal 10 Reduce inequality within and between countries

10.7 Facilitate safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and **well-managed migration** policies

10.c By 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant **remittances** and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%



Current migration component in draft SDGs: Goal 17

Goal 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and the global partnership for sustainable development

17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries... to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, **migratory status**, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts



Gender-and-Migration in the post-2015 process

Little engagement *between* these two components within post-2015 process:

- Near absence of migration in gender debates (except as trafficking)
- Limited inclusion of gender in migration component (except as workers)

Emerging gendered critiques of SDG migration discourse:

- “Women and Global Migration Working Group” (AWID)
- Migration and Development “Push Group”
- Academics (e.g. Nicola Piper, Sydney)



Women and Global Migration

Working Group, September 2014

“As a working group made up of women’s, labor, faith, and migrant rights organizations, we do NOT want to merely “add women” or “add migrants” to a failed development model. We are less concerned about “where women and migrants are mentioned” than we are about the corporate-driven development model itself, which violates the human rights of women, migrants, and migrant women in particular.”

<http://wgmwg.org/2014/09/sdgs-and-the-post-2015-development-agenda/>



Other gender-based critiques of migration in the SDGs

- Omission of social protection for migrants and their families
- Fail to think beyond remittances in recognizing migrants' contributions to development, including in destination countries
- Problematic implicit assumption that circular migration is an ideal developmental form
- Don't acknowledge the gendering of migration and its development impacts



Insights from research in Southern Africa

- Research on gender and migration in Southern Africa through SAMP since 1997
- My PhD student Riley Dillon's work on Zimbabwean migrants in Botswana (2010-present)
- Changes in gendered patterns and practices of migration in the region
- Gender and remittances, including their social and economic dimensions



Southern Africa: women migrants

- Women migrants are in more precarious and less well-paid occupations than male migrants
- Women's remittances are as essential to the receiving households as men's remittances, despite coming from lower earnings
- Men's and women's remittances contribute primarily to household poverty reduction and basic needs
- Female migrants experience abuse, violence and social stigmatization
- Emotional labour of family separation



Southern Africa: women “left behind”

- Many women (and girls) stay behind and become household heads
- Increased autonomy but also increased vulnerability
- Increased burden of care particularly by elderly women
- Migrants’ wives’ mobility and independence is often restricted through increased surveillance by other family members
- Partners’ re-marriage or infidelity lead to decreased remittances



Supporting or Subverting Development Goals?

What would a more gender-sensitive, migration-aware post-2015 development agenda look like?

- Include a migration goal, with gender incorporated
- Include migration and migrant rights in the gender SDG
- Mainstream gender *and* migration throughout the SDGs, including health and education goals
- Recognize migrants as development agents
- Challenge how and at what scale development is measured
- Move towards a rights-based approach rather than viewing migrants as “tools” for development

Acknowledgements



The Africa Portal is an online knowledge resource for policy-related issues on Africa.